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ABSTRACT

The 10 issues of IDRA Newsletter published in 2000 focus on education in Texas and on national and statewide educational issues concerning minority, low-income, or bilingual students. Feature articles include: "Musical Chairs and Unkept Promises" (reforming education to keep all students "in the game"); "The ENLACE Initiative: Strengthening Communities, Increasing Opportunity, Fostering Success"; "Parent Leaders in School"; "Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Upcoming: Much Debate but Little Movement"; "Program Evaluation and Title VII Programs: Some Guiding Ideas"; "We Should Not Kid Ourselves: Excellence Requires Equity"; "Equity Principles and School Reform: What It Takes To Ensure That 'All Means All'"; "Why Better Isn't Enough: A Closer Look at TAAS Gains" (achievement gains on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills); "Math and Science Get C+ on Report Card on Gender Equity"; "Making a Difference for Children: Comprehensive Centers Network"; "Are Computers Appropriate in the Early Childhood Classroom? A Case for Cyberkinder"; "Teaching Limited-English-Proficient Students through the Arts"; "Bridging the Digital Divide in Our Schools: Achieving Technology Equity for All Students"; "Sticks and Stones: What Words Are to Self-Esteem"; "Valued Parent Leadership"; "Parents Are the Best Advocates"; "Bridging the Gap between Schools and Families: A Family Friendly Approach"; "Project Alianza: Second Year Milestone"; "Development through Engagement: Valuing the 'At-Promise' Community"; "A Note To Say 'Thank You'" (community task forces planning for educational equity); "Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Another Success Story"; "Carrying Out Our New Promise" (Leadership in Diversity initiatives); "Equity Challenges Continue"; "'Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way'--Marianita Chee's Story"; "TEA's School Leaver Codes: The Rest of the Story"; "Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools: 1999-00 Study Results"; "IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Model Dropout Prevention Program"; "Fulfilling a Commitment to Small, Rural, and Remote Districts";

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"Nine Priorities for Public Education: Policy Reforms in Texas"; "Partnerships Facilitate Educational Access and Opportunity for Latino Youth"; and "Do We Lose Ourselves When We Lose Our Language? Why Care about Language Recapture." (Contains a cumulative index, January-December 2000.) (SV)

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

ISSN 1069-5672 Volume XXVII, No. 1 January 2000

Musical Chairs and Unkept Promises

María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

Inside this Issue:

- **New initiative for higher education**
- **Parent leaders in schools**
- **Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**
- **Evaluating Title VII programs**

The year 2000 is a good time to take stock of where we are, why we are here, and what is needed. Really, we already know what is needed. You may recall a book by Robert Fulghum, entitled *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*.

In another of his books, Robert Fulghum tells a story of a philosophy class he taught (Fulghum, 1993). On the first day of class, he announced that they were going to play musical chairs. The students enthusiastically arranged their chairs in a line with the seats in alternating directions. No one asked *how* to play. They already knew the rules.

He started the tape recorder playing "Stars and Stripes," and the students marched around the chairs. Mind you, these were seniors in high school. They had not played musical chairs since second grade. But they still knew how and jumped into the game without hesitation. Musical chairs! All right!

He removed a few chairs and stopped the music. The students scrambled to find seats. Those without chairs were stunned. They knew how this game worked: the music stops, you get a chair. How could they not have a chair so soon? Written across their faces was, "How dumb can I be?"

Oh well, too bad. They were losers. You are out. Go stand against the wall – over there.

The music continued as the remaining students marched around. Chairs were removed. The music stopped. Students went crazy trying to get a chair.

As the game went on, the quest for chairs became serious. Then it became rough. The girls were not going to fight jocks for chairs. Losers to the wall.

Now they were down to two members of the wrestling team. They were willing to push, knee, kick, or bite to get that last chair. This is war! When the music stopped, one guy jerked the chair out from under his opponent and slammed down into it. He had a look of triumph on his face. He raised his hands high with his forefingers signaling Number One, Number One!

He acted as if the class admired him and his accomplishment. He got the chair. "I'm the winner!"

Wrong. The losers, lined up against the back wall, thought he was a jerk.

This is not a game. Games are supposed to be fun. This got too serious too fast – like high school life, like real life.

Did they want to play again? A few of the jocks did. But not the rest of the class. It all came back to them now. Big deal.

Traditional Education Game

That is how we traditionally play the game of musical chairs. It is similar to the way we traditionally deal with schooling.

For example, if you are watching the game being played, you can usually tell who is not going to make it. In musical chairs, it is easy to see who is moving slower than the others. You can tell by the way a particular girl behaves that she may be embarrassed to run too fast or to fight too hard to get a chair. You can tell who seems confused when the music is stopped, who lets others grab chairs from under him. It is easy to see who will fail.

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Sometimes, when the person leading the game, and playing the music, watches the marching students, there is even some choosing when to stop the music to help favorite students win.

We do the same with school children. It is usually easy to see who is moving slower than the others. We can tell who is easily distracted. We think less of those we believe do not want to run or do not fight very hard.

Judgements are made about students' potential. We stop and start praise, encouragement, and resources based on our judgements of who can win. Often, those judgements follow students all the way through school – and through life. How many times have you heard people say they can look at a class of first graders and identify who will not make it to graduation?

In the game of musical chairs, there are certain characteristics you have to have to do well. It helps to be of a certain size. You really need to be able to take stock quickly of what is happening around you. You must be fast and you have to keep an ear out for the music. If you do not have those characteristics, too bad. You are out.

Schools have traditionally been designed to serve students with certain characteristics too. It has often made sense to many people to prescribe teaching methods and programs to serve the most students with the least amount of effort or expense.

So, grand school reform schemes have been designed based on the characteristics of White, middle-class, mostly male children who speak English. And then, almost as an afterthought, they are adopted or slightly adapted for children of color, for girls, for those who speak another language, and for poor kids.

Such "trickle down" efforts usually end up reforming schools to benefit those who are already doing well and say "life's tough" to those who are not.

What happens when a student who was out tries to get back into the game? In musical chairs, no one is allowed back. It would not be fair to the other players. You can watch, but you cannot be a part of the action. You do not have the skill, you do not have the speed. If someone tries to get back in, there is an uproar. You should be satisfied with how far you made it. The game is for someone else now. Be quiet.

In a school setting, if a young person has been labeled at risk, what happens? Students labeled at risk immediately become problems. And what do people do with problems? They either ignore the problems, get rid of them, or try to fix them.

Ignore the problems: Put the problem kids in special education classes or in classrooms with watered-down, connect-the-dot curriculum or give them the least-experienced, least powerful teachers, babysit them – be not concerned about whether or not they are learning – and they will not interfere with the real students.

Get rid of the problems: Send the students who do not fit the mold to alternative settings or encourage them to leave school.

Try to "fix" the problems: If only they were not poor, or they spoke English better or their parents cared, then they could learn. Fix them by providing remedial instruction and compensatory programs and slow things down in order for the students to get it. Try to train parents on how to raise their kids, and we tell poor parents to think like middle-class ones. Ignore, get rid of, fix...

But, if we are just re-arranging the same number of chairs, can more students find a seat when the music stops?

Obviously, re-arranging the chairs in the game does not accommodate more winners. We can do the math: 10 chairs in a line is the same as 10 chairs in a circle. Yet in schools, we often re-arrange personnel and programs but keep the same barriers in place.

Winners and Losers

There are certain things we get as a result of the way we play this education game. We get low achievement. We get caring teachers who burn out. And we get students dropping out.

Many reports show that despite the success of some dropout initiatives in some areas, the dropout picture remains strikingly troublesome. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released a report indicating that the dropout rate has climbed since 1982, and it is currently even higher than it was in 1967 (1997).

The NCES findings are consistent with the Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) attrition analyses in Texas and an IDRA dropout study released earlier this year entitled, *Missing: Texas Youth – Dropout and Attrition Rates in Texas*

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15 Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, © 2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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The ENLACE Initiative: Strengthening Communities, Increasing Opportunity, Fostering Success

Oanh H. Maroney, M.A.

Most people are familiar with the well-known African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." The advice prescribed therein is the building block for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Engaging Latino Communities for Education (ENLACE) initiative. The $28.7 million six-year initiative is supporting broad, community-wide coalition building and collaboration as a catalyst for increasing opportunities for Latino students to achieve educational success. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is serving as the managing partner for the initiative. The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) is serving as cluster evaluator.

Coalitions to Support the Educational Pipeline

ENLACE is derived from the Spanish word *enlazar*, which means to link or weave together. The linking together or weaving of valuable resources in the community is a vital component of the initiative. Based on a framework of experience derived from the learnings from other W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded initiatives, the three continuous threads for ENLACE include: a common vision of a brighter future for Latino youth, collaborative work in coalitions, and a focus on strengthening public school-university-community partnerships.

ENLACE will increase opportunities for Latinos to enter and complete college through sustainable partnerships among higher education institutions and local communities. The foundation believes that the most effective way to achieve this goal is to maximize and leverage already-existing resources in communities. ENLACE seeks to create change through enhancing community-wide coalitions that will foster success by supporting students as they proceed from public school to higher education. The critical component is a seamless educational pipeline that is supported by the community.

In Phase I of the initiative, the foundation is providing one-year planning grants of up to $100,000 to 10 to 15 coalitions in the initiative's target areas: California, Florida, New York, Texas, the Midwest (Illinois and Michigan), and the Southwest (Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico). See Page 4 for the list of grantees.

In Phase II of the initiative, the foundation will provide eight to 10 implementation grants of up to $2 million each over four years. (Only Phase I grantees will be eligible to submit proposals for Phase II implementation grants.)

Phase III of the effort will focus on institutionalization and sustainability. The initiative will assess impact and garner lessons learned from projects, both individually and collectively. This information will be disseminated to impact additional change by sharing best practices with other communities throughout the United States.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation anticipates several key outcomes as a result of ENLACE:

- Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) and other institutions of higher education will be strengthened in their roles to become catalysts for change within their communities.
- HSIs and other institutions will act in partnership with Latino communities to articulate and implement comprehensive plans aimed at strengthening the educational pipeline, decreasing high school dropout rates, and increasing

ENLACE Initiative - continued on page 4

Did You Know?

More than 12 percent of all newly hired teachers have no training at all, and 15 percent enter the classroom without having met state standards.

56 percent of secondary physical science teachers and 27 percent of mathematics teachers do not have backgrounds in those fields. The proportions are much higher in high-poverty schools and lower track classes.

There are about 3.5 million students in the United States with limited English proficiency, which is about 8 percent of the U.S. public school population (41.6 million).

A total of 42 percent of public school teachers have limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in their classes.

Nearly 25 percent of schools in high poverty areas report difficulty in finding bilingual education teachers.

Only 28 percent of public school teachers with LEP students in their classes report that they have received formal training to teach LEP students.

In California, there is a need for 19,500 bilingual education teachers, yet only 7,775 classroom teachers possess bilingual education credentials and certificates.

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

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college completion rates.

- Latino organizations, communities, and students will be represented substantively in decision making, in the formation of plans, in the implementation of creative educational models, and in the governance process.
- Latino faculty and student leadership roles and capacity will be expanded in the process of developing and implementing plans and in sustaining partnerships.
- Innovative plans, based on the objectives of ENLACE, will be developed to promote a sense of communal responsibility for greater academic access and success for Latino youth.
- Models and information about university-public school-community-business partnerships will reach a variety of local, state, and national audiences, including decision makers, colleges, universities, school districts, and policy-makers.
- New ways of collaborating will lead to broader educational development through community service components and multisector investment.
- Dialogue with key public policy stakeholders will identify points of leverage f[illegible]temic change.

Engaged Communities

ENLACE presents numerous possibilities. The potential for impact and change is challenging and encouraging. Even in planning for the six-year initiative, the ideas, activities and goals generated by the various project coalitions may be implemented and sustained outside of the formal initiative. While the funding available from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a hearty incentive, the key factor that will make the initiative and any of the proposed coalitions successful is the willingness of the coalition partners to invest their commitment to the effort.

Strengthened communities will be nurtured and supported by the effects of new and sustained coalitions. Institutional engagement is embedded in the concept of strengthened communities. The Kellogg Commission of the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (1999) says the ideal of engagement involves partnerships in which:

- problems are defined together;
- goals and agendas are shared in common;
- definitions of success are meaningful to both the university and the community and are developed together; and
- university and public funds are pooled or leveraged.

When all of these factors are at work, everyone in the community is a stakeholder. The Kellogg Commission notes, "The most successful engagement efforts appear to be those associated with strong and healthy relationships with partners in government, business and the non-profit world."

Strengthened communities and engaged institutions will foster sustained institutional change. Such change can include (but certainly is not limited to) transformed institutional policies, practices and perspectives. With institutional change comes the erosion of the old "Ivory Tower" perspective, which then gives way to new and sustained opportunities for communities to lend their voices and their assets to the institution in such ways that everyone benefits from the new relationship. While the university is a source of great academic knowledge, it can only be maximized as a resource when the knowledge that the institution generates and transmits is valuable and applicable to the community that it serves.

As a result, we will have increased student and faculty diversity, along with increased support for student success at institutions of higher education. This will benefit the institutions, the students, and the entire community.

The Difference

Even before grants were announced, ENLACE began making an impact in many communities as partners gathered to discuss potential collaborations. IDRA has fielded numerous questions from prospective grantees about the initiative and shared these questions and answers on our web page. We have heard wonderful testimonies about the networking that has already taken place and the coalitions that have been formed as a result of this effort. People and institutions have come together for the purpose of ENLACE who have not come together before and who might not have even thought about coming together, were it not for this initiative.

While only a limited number of proposals are being funded as part of this effort, the hope is that the coalitions that have been formed will recognize the value in what they have created to this point and continue to work toward achieving the initiative's goals of access and opportunity for Latino students. The possibilities that stem out of ENLACE are endless.

Due to the efforts of many, ENLACE is making a difference. Individuals and institutions in communities are taking a stand for Latino students. Communities are being strengthened by the development of inclusive, interrelational partnerships where everyone is a stakeholder in the well-being of that community. It is anticipated that communities will see that the new entity being formed is stronger than all of its parts, and can look within themselves to determine how to capitalize on the strengths that each part of the community brings to bear. People are, in fact, willing to change the status quo – eager to make a difference.

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ENLACE Initiative Grantees

The following coalitions have been awarded grants by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for Phase I of the ENLACE Initiative.

Southwest
Arizona State University
University of Southern Colorado
Sante Fe Community College
University of New Mexico
New Mexico State University

Midwest
Northeastern Illinois University

California
California State University Fresno
California State University Los Angeles
University of California Santa Barbara
Santa Ana College

Florida
University of South Florida
Florida International University
Miami-Dade Community College

New York
City College of New York – Lehman College
City College of New York – Hostos Community College

Texas
St. Edward's University
Southwest Texas State University
University of Texas Brownsville/Texas Southmost College

Parent Leaders in Schools

Rogelio López del Bosque, Ed.D.

On September 19, at the age of 93, my wonderful mother passed away after having suffered a stroke a year and a half before. The next day, I had the arduous task of presenting her eulogy. I really wanted to focus on her contributions to the community, to the church and to us as her children.

At one time, our school did not provide information in Spanish or make any effort to communicate with non-English-speaking parents. For these parents, including my mother, making an appearance at school was totally unheard of. Those who did were greeted with negative attitudes.

I am certain that my mother could have taught the school much, since she was well educated in her native Mexico. Given that she also lived a very traditional life as a wife and mother, finding the time to participate in school functions was almost impossible.

My mother's participation in our education and in helping the school encompassed such things as making sure we had a good night's rest, that we had a good breakfast prior to going to school, that we were clean, and that we had our homework and all our books. These things were expected not only by my mother, but also by my father. My parents' indirect participation in school was never acknowledged or considered by the school staff.

Perspectives on Parent Involvement

There are schools out there that still question the validity of parent involvement. The challenge we face is dealing with the mindsets and expectations of many school personnel who claim parents do not *want* to get involved. They consider parent involvement as a means to tell parents what they "should" know rather than asking parents what they need or want.

Too often, the assumption is that parents do not know anything and cannot do anything right or worthwhile. This assumption is based on a deficit view of parents. Some schools are even proud of how bad their parent involvement problem is and have lists of reasons it is not the school's fault.

For many parents, particularly minority parents, dealing with schools means going back to an institution that failed them, treated them as second class citizens and had low expectations of their potential. This – coupled with other obvious obstacles such as unfriendly office personnel, a negative atmosphere, staff who are openly hostile, and parent meetings that are scheduled at inappropriate times – can make many parents want to stay away from schools, despite their commitment to their children's education.

There are schools that welcome parents with open arms and genuinely go out of their way to make parents an integral part of the school and educational learning process.

On the other hand, there are schools that welcome parents with open arms and genuinely go out of their way to make parents an integral part of the school and educational learning process. The atmosphere in the front office is open and friendly. School personnel already understand that parents are valuable and can make a difference in children's learning. It is no longer a setting where parents are asked only to help with the occasional bake sales, festivals, and punch and cookie receptions. It is now about parents in leadership roles.

Today, as I work with parents, it is obvious that, although they may not be participating in a traditional way with their children's school, they care about their children as much as my lovely mother did. I see visions of my mother and father in the audience as I work with these parents. They *do* care, they want the best for their children, and they have things they need to tell us to provide for those children. What I have experienced is that, in many cases, schools have things they want parents to do and learn to make their jobs easier, but seldom have schools taken the time to listen to parents to see what *they* need. What parents feel they need and what the educational system needs can be two different things. A combination, however, leaves a window open for validation of the parents and provides them an opportunity to take charge of or buy in to parent participation activities.

Parent Leadership Development

Currently, I am working with two districts where we are implementing IDRA's parent leadership program. This program provides parents an opportunity to become leaders within their schools, communities, religious settings and other important parts of their lives. The major premise of this process is acknowledgment, validation and valuing of parents because they are or can be

- the first teachers of the children,
- resources to the school,
- decision makers within the school, and
- trainers of other parents.

In one of these school districts in Texas where we have been implementing the program since 1998, we started the program with Spanish-speaking parents only and have continued during this school year with Spanish- and English-speaking parents. Although most parents do not speak both languages, they are able to communicate and even meet without outside facilitation in order to plan for events. The process they used in planning ways to get more parents involved was used again to develop the plans for the events they would be setting up for the year.

This year, as a group, these parents planned the open house program for the school. As they developed the plan to set up committees for disbursing information, making phone calls, collecting door prizes, bringing food, registering participants, and other duties, the parents were able to put into practice their roles as leaders in planning and working among themselves. They were also able to work together to hold a garage sale to raise money for the teachers and the students.

According to the parents participating in the leadership program, they now feel there is more communication among parents, better organization for planning as well as learning how to plan effectively, the

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opportunity to become more involved in the education of their children, the opportunity to unite two different cultures, and better opportunities to work together and learn from one another.

Another outcome of the parent leadership program is the realization among school personnel that there are many parents who are really interested in participating and available to help for their own children and for other children as well. Participants in the parent leadership program will soon be connected with a statewide parent network and will attend some of the state and national conferences where they will have an opportunity to participate and to present.

Some of the sessions planned by the parent leadership program participants were better attended than others. This gave me an opportunity to discuss an aspect of leadership that includes evaluating how a plan did or did not work. The group discussed reasons parents may not have come to the meetings without criticizing or judging them for the lack of participation. I was also able to reinforce that a major responsibility of being a leader is to listen and that judging parents who were not able to attend meetings or functions only hinders the process of getting them involved.

At a middle school in a large Texas city, we are using the parent leadership program to develop leaders for the school as well as to be an integral part of the accelerated schools model. Through "assets mapping," parents explore the positive traits of the school, the community and themselves. As a result, parents look at how they will help to resolve some of the discipline problems of the school through their involvement with students.

The parents have also set up committees to do everything from making reminder calls to transporting parents to the meetings. Another exciting initiative the parents have taken on is creating a calender of events – including the parent meetings – that are happening in the school. They are also drafting a short note form in English and Spanish that can be sent with their children to school as another way of finding out the status of their children's education. The note includes sections where the teachers can select areas that the particular student may need work on – such as conduct or being tardy. The form also gives the teacher a chance to make additional comments. The purpose of the note is to have the parents and teachers see that there are ways for parents to offer assistance to teachers.

Many of the wonderful parents who I work with have children in three levels of school: elementary, middle and high school. The leadership program teaches these parents skills they can use regardless of their children's age. Some of the parents are preparing to be trainers of other parents. The dimension of parents being trainers-of-trainers contributes even more to the schools.

The participants who go through the parent leadership training have the opportunity to train others, to make contacts through a network of major national and state conferences, and to develop the skills it takes to recruit more parents into the leadership training process.

It has been four months since I lost my mother. As I said in my eulogy, she was and always will be my first teacher. Did she have the skills of a teacher? The answer is yes, because she did the best with what she had and with what she knew. More than anything, she had the expectation that we would succeed. She must have done something right since, in 1948, one of my older sisters earned a scholarship to Mary Hardin-Baylor University. Back then, many women (especially Hispanic women) did not go to college.

Many good teachers saw my potential and taught me and worked with me so that I believed in myself. I am ever so appreciative of this. But my dear and wonderful mother taught me beyond believing that I could succeed. She taught me to know I could succeed, so I now see the difference between believing and knowing.

So, what can we do to get our parents involved? Recognizing that parents want to get involved and that they have skills schools need, is a good start. Understanding that they are wonderful resources and can enhance their children's learning, that they can make a difference, is a good start. But, it must be backed with concrete plans and actions that are mutually beneficial – and ultimately successful for the children. The challenge of getting parents involved in their children's education is one you will never regret taking.

Rogelio López del Bosque, Ed.D., is the marketing coordinator in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Internet Web Sites on Bilingual Education

Charlotte's ESL Listening Activities www.stir.ac.uk/epd/celt/call97/Charlott/Dissn
Cuentos de Ika Bremer www.ika.com/cuentos/menu.html
Cutting-Edge CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) Demos
www-writing.berkeley.edu/chorus/call/cuttingedge.html
EFLWeb www.eflweb.com
El CyberSchoolBus de las Naciones Unidas
www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/spanish
E-mail Projects for ESL Learners
www.otan.dni.us/webfarm/emailproject/email.htm
Intensive American Language Center www.ialc.wsu.edu
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
Interesting Things for ESL Students www.aitech.ac.jp/~itesls
Internet Resources for Language Teachers and Learners
www.hull.ac.uk/cti/langsite.htm
Linguistic Minority Research Institute lmrinet.gse.ucsb.edu
National Association for Bilingual Education www.nabe.org
National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education www.ncbe.gwu.edu
Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs
www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA
PIZZAZ! People Interested in Zippy and ZAnny Zcribbling
darkwing.uoregon.edu/~leslieob/pizzaz.html
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) www.tesol.edu

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Upcoming

Much Debate but Little Movement

Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

In 1965, the U.S. Congress passed major legislation that, for the first time, provided substantive federal funding to public education. This legislation came to be known as the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA).

Over the years, ESEA has been the centerpiece of federal involvement in public education. The act is the federal basis for a number of major programs outlined under various "titles" in the bill. The largest of these programs is Title I, which authorizes the federal compensatory education act. It was renamed "Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards" in 1995. While Title I is the largest and best known, an array of other federally-funded initiatives are also housed within ESEA.

Every five years, the U.S. Congress revisits the legislation to decide whether or not to keep existing legislation intact or to revise all or portions of it. This process is called "reauthorization." The 1995 reauthorization – called the *Improving America's Schools Act* – included 14 titles (see box at right). Congress is currently considering the next ESEA reauthorization.

Although ESEA is broad in scope and coverage, the beginnings of legislative deliberations on these issues have focused on a few key programs. Debates have been held in congressional sub-committees where the chairpersons have discussed how they wish to approach the reauthorization of ESEA. The chairpersons needed to decide whether to handle ESEA as one omnibus bill that includes all of the 14 programs; to break the various components into smaller, distinct legislative proposals; or to consider which programs Congress may wish to delete or significantly modify. Whichever approach is used, early deliberations clearly indicate that major battles will be fought over the nature of Title I – the largest federal education program.

Unfortunately for educators and children, the conflicts over ESEA reauthorization and the billion dollar allocations associated with the package have reduced the debate to a bitter partisan confrontation. Each side is committed to distinct and different agendas that are tied to upcoming national and state election campaigns. The result has been little or no substantive progress to date on most of the major issues incorporated into the reauthorization proposals. Early skirmishes however have provided some insights into the distinctive emphases being promoted by the major parties.

Disadvantaged Children

Some legislators are targeting Title I as an area for major reforms with ideas such as reallocating all monies into a federally-funded voucher program that would allow funds to be used to educate eligible children in private and religious schools or creating provisions that would promote "portability" (mon-

Much Debate - continued on page 8

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Title I	**Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards** (historically referred to as the federal compensatory education program, and including Title I migrant education programs)
Title II	**Dwight D. Eisenhower High Standards in the Classroom** (professional development program)
Title III	**Technology for Education**
Title IV	**Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities**
Title V	**Promoting Equity, Excellence, and Public School Choice** (includes magnet schools assistance, women's educational equity programs and assistance to help schools address dropout problems)
Title VI	**Innovative Educational Program Strategies** (class-size reduction)
Title VII	**Bilingual Education, Language Enhancement and Language Acquisition Programs** (revised in 1995 to include emergency immigrant impact aid and foreign language assistance programs)
Title VIII	**Impact Aid** (funding to help schools offset the effects of the presence of federally connected children residing in local school districts)
Title IX	**Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education**
Title X	**Programs of National Significance** (includes the fund for the improvement of education, gifted and talented children and charter schools)
Title XI	**Coordinated Services** (programs that enhance access to health and social services and other support services provided by non-school agencies)
Title XII	**School Facilities Infrastructure Improvement Act** (designed to help target federal funding to schools in major need of facilities renovation and/or new construction)
Title XIII	**Support and Assistance Programs to Improve Education** (includes comprehensive regional assistance centers, Eisenhower regional math and science education consortia program, the national diffusion network and technology-based technical assistance programs)
Title XIV	**General Provisions** (addresses a broad array of issues related to the various acts including definitions, use of administrative and other funds, coordination of programs and consolidated state and local plans and applications, and waivers among other issues)

Much Debate - continued from page 7

ies following pupils who chose to transfer from their present neighborhood schools to other school settings).

Issues of how Title I funds will be allocated are also in the center of the debate. Some policy-makers are pushing to have more schools deemed Title I eligible, allowing them to access and use federal Title I funding. Current law requires that the monies be allocated to schools with the highest concentrations of low-income pupils. Proposed reforms would modify the percentages that are used to qualify schools for Title I participation, with the threshold level lowered from 50 percent to 40 percent or below. Advocates of the current formulas express concern that such expansion of eligibility will only serve to dilute available monies and lead to reduced access and weaken the current focus on the neediest schools.

A critical issue surrounding Title I is widespread concern about whether Title I has been effective in significantly improving educational achievement in many of the schools where the money is being allocated. This has led to an expanding emphasis on program accountability. The latest appropriation debate was characterized by this issue and led to an allocation of extra funds to help schools facilitate pupils transferring from low-performing schools to more successful public schools. Because of the large sums of funding allocated to Title I, it is highly unlikely that the demand for improved student performance in Title I programs will subside. Advocates of minority and low-income pupils should be on guard to ensure that, in the needed push for program accountability, responsibility lies with schools, not on the pupils served by the program. Advocates must also ensure that schools are held accountable for improved outcomes and that all pupils acquire access to the instruction and related opportunities to learn that are essential to an acceptable student accountability system.

Students with Limited English Proficiency

In addition to Title I, Congress is locked in bitter battles over the shape and direction of federal bilingual education legislation (Title VII). Many members of Congress are committed to strategies that limit the programs' scopes and impose different requirements that result in limited use of home languages and burdensome pre-placement requirements not found in comparable programs serving mainstream pupils. Title VII also faces ongoing battles to secure adequate funding and, if secured, to ensure that those monies are allocated to students with the greatest need.

A related debate focuses on professional development of teachers who serve students with limited English proficiency. Conservatives have opposed providing ongoing staff development support from federal sources, while moderates and liberals point to perpetual shortages of adequately-prepared bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) teachers to justify an ongoing federal investment in this area.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Title IV (relating to safe and drug-free schools) had been a point of major debate and was at one time targeted for elimination or at least major renovation by a number of legislators. However, increased media attention to school violence has spurred a renewed push for a federal role in promoting safe and drug-free schools. Given this, the debates have shifted to focus on the nature and scope of nationally-supported efforts.

Education Funding

Congress faces other education issues as well. These include the extent of federal funding for recruiting and training new teachers, the federal role that should be played in helping local communities with school construction costs, and the role that the government should play in supporting and sustaining educational reform – including the critical issue of whether, how, and in what form it should provide support for staff development.

Central to much of the debate is the issue of funding. One facet of that question is how much federal funding for public kindergarten through 12th grade education will be set aside, as compared to funding for other federal priorities such as the military and foreign policy.

A second battle will occur as Congress attempts to sort out the monies that it decides will be allocated to education. In this area, the debates will center on how much will be allocated to Title I, Title VII, Title IV and other major programs that are incorporated within ESEA. With proponents of specific programs vying for support, no decisive action in this area is expected before the end of the current congressional term. The Congress that will emerge after the fall elections, however, will need to address and reconcile all these competing educational priorities.

Given the highly partisan nature of the current reauthorization discussions, and the

Much Debate - continued on page 12

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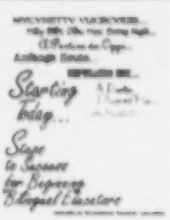

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When I Become a Teacher...

Evelyn López

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt of a final essay submitted by college-student Evelyn López at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Her adjunct professor was Frank Gonzales, Ph.D., an IDRA senior education associate. Dr. Gonzales retired in December after 22 years of dedicated service to IDRA and to improving education.

As a future teacher in the 21st century, my goal is to reach as many of my students as possible by making them feel valued and successful at learning. In this course I have learned many things about different cultures, different beliefs, different ways of communicating and different ways of learning. All of this will be extremely helpful in my new career. I have also learned that racism is still alive in today's world and that one of my responsibilities as a teacher will be teaching my students about other cultures and lifestyles.

Our world is becoming more of a global society every day. The classrooms of tomorrow will be filled with people of color. It is my responsibility as a teacher to know as much as I can about the students in my class. It is my responsibility to learn how to communicate best with them and their parents. I have learned that people from different cultures communicate in different ways.

During this semester we watched a video called *American Tongues*. This video showed examples of a few of the many dialects that are spoken in the United States. Sometimes people hear other people speaking in dialects that are unfamiliar to them and automatically assume that the person is uneducated. The film showed that this is not the case. Just because a person speaks with an accent or a dialect does not mean they are ignorant and uneducated. Throughout the semester I have learned that sometimes people speak in a certain manner when hanging out with their friends or in certain situations.

Some of my students may come from a home where Ebonics is spoken. It is my responsibility to take the time to understand what my students are trying to tell me. It is also my responsibility to try to understand where my students are coming from. The parents may feel intimidated if their child starts speaking in a different manner. They may feel intimidated when I speak to them in a certain manner. I will be considerate and open minded when dealing with people who are different from me. I will learn about different cultures so that I will not offend or be defensive.

Every student in my class will be given a fair chance. They may not begin at the same level regarding background, race and economic status, but I will do my best to make sure that each student feels that he is important and that he is able to learn. How will I make my students feel important? I will value them as an individuals. I will respect them and their culture and beliefs. I will listen to them. I will learn how best to communicate with them. I will teach them.

How will I teach them? I will use the seven different intelligences. I will appeal to the body/kinesthetic learner by incorporating movement and hands-on experience into my lesson plan. I will attract the visual spatial learner with eye-catching posters, colorful graphs and pictures. I will get in tune with the musical/rhythmic learner by incorporating music and musical instruments in to the

When I - continued on page 12

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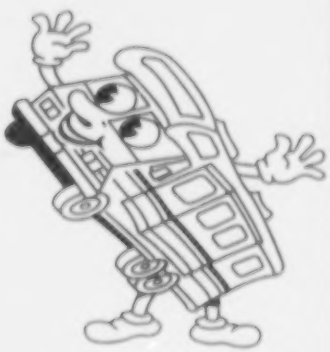

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- Related *IDRA Newsletter* articles and projects
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Each month we will ask a new question for readers online. A sample of responses will be printed in a later issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*.

This month's question is...

What is the most important educational issue facing us in the new decade?

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The institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development concurrent sessions that are customized to the varied needs of early childhood educators and administrators. Information on any additional sessions will be available at the institute. The topics for this years' institute include innovative instructional strategies, information about policy issues, and the latest research.

School Visits

Take this opportunity to visit model early childhood centers. School visits provide you with the opportunity to share ideas while seeing them in action. Institute participants will travel to high-performing, high-minority schools in the San Antonio area that are effectively working with diverse learners. Two school visits (one each on Wednesday and Thursday) are available to the first 150 institute registrants on a first come, first served basis. Transportation will be provided.

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IDRA is pleased to bring you this Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Supporting IDRA projects include:

- IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) and
- *STAR Center* (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation).

Each of these IDRA projects provides specialized training and technical assistance to public schools. Information on how your campus can use these resources to improve instruction and assessment will be available at the institute and may also be obtained by calling IDRA at 210-444-1710 or by visiting IDRA's web site (www.idra.org).

Hotel Information

The institute will be held at the San Antonio Airport Hilton. The hotel is offering a special rate of $95 per night for a single or double room (plus state and local taxes), based on availability. The hotel reservation deadline for the reduced rate is April 10, 2000. Call 1-800-HILTONS to make reservations. Be sure to reference the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute in order to qualify for the special rate.

Conference Topics...

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- Early childhood education in the new century: Opportunities for all students
- The role of early childhood education in creating a nation of learners – reflecting on the national education goals

Literacy
- Including fantasy and imagination in the early childhood curriculum
- The language, The teacher and the child: Integrating a harmonious whole
- Creating literacy opportunities at home
- Effective instructional strategies for reluctant young readers

Social Development
- Children's literature: A tool to develop social skills in the early childhood classroom

Child Development
- Developing language, thoughts and values in the early childhood classroom

Multicultural Education
- The use of authentic literature in the classroom: Sharing our values

Curriculum
- Integrating fine arts in the early childhood program: A project approach

Play
- The child's right to play

Research
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Program Evaluation and Title VII Programs: Some Guiding Ideas

Adela Solís, Ph.D.

The evaluation of educational programs is a critical, non-negotiable activity in schools that implement programs with federal, state and other external sources of funding. Evaluation is the way to discover strengths and weaknesses in program operations. It is the way by which practices – such as teaching, lesson planning and program managing – are assessed and re-directed to cause the program to have a better impact on student learning. Evaluation is also a way to determine whether what a school is doing through its various funded programs has worth or merit.

To the government and agencies that supply financial resources, this determination informs their decisions for possible continued funding of programs. School districts that continually operate programs through these types of external funds are keenly interested in providing evidence of worth and merit. Yet many struggle to understand and manage the evaluation process.

Numerous schools in Texas receive financial assistance from the federal government through the various provisions of the *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) to serve minority and disadvantaged students. Title I program funds are the most common source of assistance. An increasing number of school districts have also been receiving funds through competitive grants under Title VII of the IASA.

The STAR Center has provided technical assistance to such school districts in Texas to aid their efforts to understand and manage evaluation requirements. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It supports Texas educators in creating systemic change that leads to achievement for all students, particularly students considered to be in at-risk situations. The center provides support and technical assistance services to regional service centers, to the Texas Education Agency, and to local school districts that are implementing state and local education reform efforts funded under the IASA. The STAR Center is a collaboration of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

A few months ago, the STAR Center at IDRA sponsored a Title VII evaluation institute for school districts operating Title VII bilingual education grants. The purpose of the institute was to assist Title VII project staff and evaluators in developing evaluations that are meaningful, useful and compliant with federal requirements. Participants had an opportunity to review principles of program evaluation, discuss strategies for conducting the evaluation and writing evaluation reports, and hear the federal government's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs' (OBEMLA) perspective on Title VII evaluation.

Participants included administrators in districts and campuses who were relatively new to Title VII projects and others who were more experienced Title VII project managers still in need of information about grant requirements under the IASA. Participant feedback concerning this two-day technical assistance event was overwhelmingly positive, and many requested that the institute be offered annually, particularly since not all grant recipients were able to attend.

Key Questions to Explore

The following topics were discussed by institute presenters and participants.

- What qualifies as a significant and worthwhile change in educational evaluation.
- Reasons for Title VII requiring evaluations.
- Important strengths and weaknesses in Title VII evaluation reports.
- Challenges involved in evaluating different types of programs.
- Components and essential elements

Program Evaluation *- continued on page 12*

Conducting Evaluation under IASA Title VII

As with any other federally-funded project, Title VII projects have specific guidelines for evaluation. The following three points in the act are particularly important.

✓ An evaluation in the form prescribed by the U.S. Secretary of Education is required every two years.

✓ The purpose of the evaluation is:
- to improve the program,
- to further define the program's goals and objectives, and
- to determine program effectiveness.

✓ Evaluation shall included these components:
- student achievement – show how students are achieving the state and student performance standards;
- program implementation indicators, including data on appropriateness of curriculum in relationship to grade and course requirements, appropriateness of program management, appropriateness of program staff development, and appropriateness of language instruction;
- program context indicators that describe the relationship of activities funded under the grant to the overall school program and other federal, state or local programs serving children and youth of limited English proficiency;
- other information as the U.S. Secretary of Education may require.

– Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, Title VII Section 7123

Program Evaluation - continued from page 11

required in Title VII evaluations.

- How to plan and conduct evaluations that meet Title VII requirements and provide useful information for program improvement.
- Common challenges and solutions in conducting evaluations.
- Key players in program evaluation, and
- Information that should be reported in the biennial evaluation and the format for the report.

Evaluators who could not participate in the institute should explore these topics in the context of their evaluation plans.

Evaluation Reporting under IASA Title VII

An important part of the evaluation component of a Title VII project is the performance report. The federal government requires grantees to submit an annual performance report that provides background information about the program, demonstrates progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the project, explains why activities or objectives have not been implemented as planned, furnishes information about current budget expenditures, and provides any other information requested by OBEMLA.

A biennial evaluation report is also required for Title VII projects. This report must provide information for program improvement, define additional goals and objectives, determine program effectiveness, and fulfill the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education. For further details on requirements for the reports, refer to *IASA Title VII: Writing the Biennial Evaluation Report* (see box above).

Some important points to know while conducting the evaluation under IASA Title VII projects are included in the box above.

Adela Solis, Ph.D., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

For information about STAR Center services call 1-888-FYI-STAR.

Resources on Evaluation

Data Analysis for Comprehensive School Improvement
by V.L. Bernhart (1998)
Eye on Education
Larchmont, New York
914/833-0551

IASA Title VII: Writing the Biennial Evaluation Report
by Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (1998)
Rio Rancho, New Mexico
505/891-6111

A Model for School Evaluation
by J.R. Sanders, J.L. Horn, R.A. Thomas, D.M. Tuckett, and H. Yang (1995)
Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation
Kalamazoo, Michigan
616/387-5895

"Significant and Worthwhile Changes in Educational Evaluation: Putting Value in Evaluation"
by J.D. Supik (September 1999)
IDRA Newsletter
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190
210/444-1710
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The Program Evaluation Standards, Second Edition
The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994)
Sage Publications
Thousands Oaks, California

Evaluation Handbook
Educational evaluation for federal education programs, particularly Title VII of IASA of 1994
by J. Wilde and S. Sockey (1995)

Much Debate - continued from page 8

unpredictability of the upcoming elections, it is difficult to project the future of specific ESEA programs. Most of the major programs probably will continue in some form. How much those programs resemble what has been in place over the last decade, however, remains to be seen.

Albert Cortez, Ph.D., is the division director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

When I - continued from page 9

learning environment. I will incorporate the logical mathematical intelligence into the sum of things by working with numbers and patterns and abstract shapes. I will reach the intrapersonal learner by journal writing and self exploration. I will talk to my students and let them talk to me and each other by working on group projects to get the interpersonal learner involved in the learning process. I will incorporate all of the seven intelligences in my lesson plans to ensure that each different type of learning will be covered so that every student will have a chance to get enthusiastic and excited about learning.

What will I teach? I will teach my students that the world is filled with many different people who do things in different ways. Different does not mean one is bad and one is good or one is good but the other is better. All people are created equal. People have to learn to hate. Fear of different people and different things causes hatred. I will teach not to hate but to value each other and each other's culture.

I will incorporate multicultural activities, such as reading poetry from different cultures, viewing art from different cultures, and reading books about different cultures into my lesson planning. I will have different foods from different cultures for the students to make and taste. I will have them write about who they are culturally. I will have them listen to music from different cultures. I will teach them that just because one student may look different, may speak differently, or may do things differently does not make that person any less of a person or less educated. The more that my students are exposed to different cultures the less they will fear people who are different from themselves. Teaching multiculturism will help to educate my students not to be racist, not to stereotype and not to hate.

How will I make a difference? I will strive to be the best teacher I can. I will challenge myself to be fair to all of my students. I will look at the "big picture" in all situations. I will set the example for my students. I will teach and learn from my students. I will do my part in trying to make racism a thing of the past. I will take the challenge to motivate and cultivate a learning environment in which students feel valued and successful in learning.

Musical Chairs - *continued from page 2*

Public High Schools (Supik and Johnson, 1999).

Thirteen years ago at IDRA, we conducted the first comprehensive statewide study of school dropouts in Texas. Using a high school attrition formula, IDRA estimated that 86,000 students had not graduated from Texas public schools that year, costing the state $17.12 billion dollars in foregone income, lost tax revenues and increased criminal justice, welfare, unemployment and job training costs.

By 1998 – 12 years later – the estimated cumulative number of Texas school dropouts has grown to more than 1.2 million. Because these students were unable to complete high school, the state of Texas loses $319 billion.

Schools often assume that the target population – whether the target population is defined by race, by gender or by language – is to blame for educational failure. Deficit-models always try to change the characteristics of the student and the family, so that the student will fit into the school program.

A close look at national data dispels some myths about the reasons for the high dropout rates among Hispanic students.

Poverty is often cited as the reason so many Hispanic students dropout. But according to the data, poverty does not explain it. Within each income level, Hispanic students are substantially more likely to drop out.

Immigration status does not explain it either. The dropout rate of Hispanic students born in the United States is 17.9 percent.

Language proficiency is another reason that is often given. (We will ignore for the moment that English is the first language for many Hispanic students.) But speaking Spanish does not explain the high dropout rates among Hispanic students.

Hispanic students who speak Spanish at home and also speak English "well" or "very well" are as likely to remain in school as are their peers who speak only English.

IDRA studies have found that Hispanic students whose first language is Spanish and those whose parents encouraged bilingualism are more likely to remain in school.

Sometimes, the deficit view is more narrow: "Parents or minority parents don't care." Let me tell you about a friend of mine and her bright son. Like his sisters before him – and like most young children – Mark cried when his mother took him to his pre-kindergarten class. The teacher assured his mother that she would take care of him. Instead, when his mother left, the teacher locked Mark in a storage room all morning. He finally managed to climb out and tried to walk home. He got lost, and it took two hours for his mother to find him.

This problem of playing the traditional education game that blames the students and families is perhaps the main reason we have failed to reduce dropout rates.

When he was in the first grade, he was struggling with his work. His parents worked with him, and his mother even visited the classroom to observe. But she never heard from the teacher and at the end of the school year, Mark had failing grades.

The teacher recommended retaining him. His parents knew that was not the best thing for Mark. The principal agreed since Mark had excellent test scores. The next year, Mark's second grade teacher constantly compared him to his older sister, "You're nothing like your sister." By this time, Mark was already internalizing what was happening. He thought there was something wrong with him.

In the third grade, he was placed in a special education class where he was challenged even less. His parents continued to plead with the school officials. A school psychologist told them, "You Mexican people, you're so close to him that you've damaged him." Mark comforted his parents while still feeling guilty inside.

Throughout the following years, Mark continued to move through school, unchallenged, struggling, alone. His parents did everything they could. They got support from an outside agency, they remained active in school leadership. His mom was even PTA president by the time he reached high school.

It was then that a teacher told Mark, "You will never amount to anything, you should just drop out and get a GED." That is what Mark did early in high school. With the GED he could have attended a graduation ceremony, but refused knowing he had not earned a real diploma. He also had the daily reminder of three sisters who were succeeding in college.

Today, he is 24 years old and works night shifts at a grocery store. He appears well-adjusted, funny, religious. But his mother recognizes that he still has a low self-esteem. He tells her not to give up on him. He attended a community college for a semester and wants to try again someday.

He has no desire to get married until he can support his wife. And, as he says, if he is blessed with children, he wants to make sure he can support them like his father supported him.

Our families contribute much. The day-to-day activities that families do with their children – story-telling, singing, playing games, reading, talking and listening – all these have intellectual, emotional and physical benefits that enhance the child's development and are strengths that the school can use.

This problem of playing the traditional education game that blames the students and families is perhaps the main reason we have failed to reduce dropout rates. You cannot really expect to solve a problem unless you diagnose it correctly.

In musical chairs, the promise is that the game will be fun – the music, the anticipation, being part of things. In education, the promise is that schooling is for everyone and is good for your future, that adults in school care about you, and that you will succeed if you do your best.

Mark did his best. The promise was broken for him. The promise is broken for the 1,370 young people who drop out of our nation's schools every day.

A New Way to Play the Game

Back in Robert Fulghum's philosophy class, the students had no desire to play musical chairs again. It was not fun after all.

But, he insisted that they play one more time, with one rule change. This time, if the students do not have a chair, they will sit in someone's lap. Everybody stays in the game, it's only a matter of where you sit. The students had to think about it for a minute. Well, OK.

They reset the chairs as before. Fulghum started the "Stars and Stripes." They marched. He removed some chairs and stopped the music. There was a pause in the action. (Do I want a chair to myself? Do I want to sit on someone's lap or have someone sit in mine? And who?) The class got seated, but the mood had changed. There was laughter, giggling. When the game began again, there was a change of pace. What is the hurry?

When the number of chairs dwindled to force two to a chair, a dimension of grace entered in, as the role of sittee and sitter was

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clarified: Oh no, please, after you. Some advance planning was evident.

As the game continued and more and more people had to share one chair, a kind of gymnastic dance form developed. It became a group accomplishment to get everyone branched out on knees. Students with organizational skills came to the fore – it is a people puzzle to solve now. "Big people on the bottom first, put your arms around him, sit back, easy, easy."

When there was one chair left, the class laughed and delightfully managed to make sure their weight was evenly distributed. If they tumbled, they would get up and try again until everyone was sitting down. Everyone was triumphant.

The only one who had trouble with this paradigm shift was the guy who won the first time, under the old rules. He did not know what winning was now.

Fulghum then told the class that they would play one more round. He would remove the last chair. When the music stopped, they would all sit down in a lap.

"How on earth can we do that?" they said. "You can find a way," he replied.

One more time, they marched to the music and stopped. They looked at each other and started giving each other direction to stand in a perfect circle. "Step toward the middle to make a tighter circle." "Place your hands on the hips of the person in front of you." "On the count of three, slowly sit and guide the person in front of you onto your knees." Ready. One. Two. Three. Sit. They all sat. No chair.

Fulghum presents this true story of how people face the problem of diminishing resources. Is it always to be a winners-losers world, or can we keep everyone in the game?

IDRA's research on strategies for reducing the dropout rate, stemming from research-based effective strategies and IDRA's experience in schools over the last 26 years, shows five components are vital to successful dropout prevention.

First, *all* students must be valued. Success will require that we value *every single* child. In fact, success will be *measured* by *how* we value every single child.

Second, there must be a support network in smaller schools with smaller class sizes where students are well known and where at least one educator in a student's life is totally – and for the long haul – committed to the success of that student.

Third, families must be valued as partners with the school.

Fourth, schools must change and innovate, providing challenging curriculum to match the characteristics of their students and embracing the strengths and contributions that students and their families bring.

Fifth, school staff – especially teachers – must be highly qualified and equipped with the tools needed to ensure their students' success, including the use of technology, different learning styles and mentoring programs. *Effective* professional development can help provide these tools.

We must also get rid of one important myth: the myth that equal opportunity exists. The truth, as researcher Linda Darling-Hammond has stated, is that "the U.S. educational system is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, and students routinely receive dramatically different learning opportunities based on their social status" (1998). The wealthiest 10 percent of U.S. school districts spend nearly 10 times more than the poorest 10 percent. Yet despite differences in funding, teacher quality, curriculum, and class sizes, the prevailing view is that if students do not achieve, it is their own fault.

By understanding how the school environment contributes to a student's failure, we can change what blocks success. What works are sound, effective and efficient educational strategies that encourage students to remain in school. There are many such strategies. Upward Bound, Communities In Schools, and the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program use such strategies.

The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is dear to my heart. It is based on the creed that all students are valuable, none is expendable. This philosophy, that all students are valuable, is helping more than 200 schools keep 98 percent of Valued Youths in school, keeping these young people in the classroom and learning.

The idea is simple and may seem unusual at first glance. We work with schools to identify students who are considered to be in at-risk situations and place them as tutors of younger students.

Participating tutors have been the ones who traditionally *receive* help; never had they been asked to *provide* help. These were the "throwaways," students who were not expected ever to graduate from high school. Yet, when given the appropriate structure, they can and do succeed.

In addition to the changes this program produces in young people, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program succeeds because it subtly but powerfully challenges and ultimately changes people's beliefs and behaviors.

One administrator recounted her first experience with the program. She knew Paul Hayes by his reputation as a student who "sent teachers into early retirement."

She watched him get off the bus at the elementary school where he would be tutoring that day. She kept a vigilant eye on him as he entered the classroom and watched in amazement as he put on a hand puppet and began teaching three little ones.

What she saw in that classroom was "Mr. Hayes." She saw Mr. Hayes' students following his every word, and learning. And she heard the elementary teacher tell how she would be lost without Mr. Hayes in her classroom.

As she watched him get back on the bus that would take him to his middle school, she wondered if his middle school teachers would see the Mr. Hayes that was in him or would they only see Paul, the at-risk student?

The greatest "at-risk" circumstance students face may be the school's low, and self-fulfilling, expectations.

A philosopher once said, "The actual proves the possible." The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program works, as do other programs across the country. All students can and are succeeding in some schools. It *can* happen in every school.

Everyone Wins

After the launch of "Apollo 13," NASA is faced with a dreadful problem. You may remember the movie telling of the story. Three astronauts are in space with a malfunctioning shuttle. It has been struck by something floating in space. There is not enough oxygen for them to breath. They do not have the tools they need to make the repairs for a problem they cannot even examine closely. It seems hopeless.

On the ground, hundreds of scientists are scratching their heads. They have been up for hours and cannot think of a workable solution. Everything they come up with brings with it a new set of problems. They start pointing fingers.

They are overwhelmed, sitting back wringing their hands. We cannot fix this. They are about to give up.

The mission director listened to the group's list of difficulties. If only this, we could have done that. It's hopeless. Then he emphatically reminded them, "Failure is *not*

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Musical Chairs *- continued from page 14*

an option!"

Failure was not an option because it would mean losing the lives of the three men in the shuttle. It would mean breaking promises made to their families. Failure was not an option because the brain power was there to create a new solution by thinking about the problem differently. Failure was not an option.

The scientists were a little bruised at first. But seeing the situation in a new light they pulled together.

They relooked at the resources before them. Once discarded as useless for their traditional purposes, the resources were now seen as possibilities. The scientists became very creative. And they succeeded. The shuttle and the astronauts were brought home safely.

What we are here today to face is a problem with even more powerful implications. Many more than three people are affected. We have tried different things, some more successful than others. Yet the dropout rate continues to climb. Many people are overwhelmed, wringing their hands. There is a lot of finger-pointing. We cannot fix this. We cannot fix them.

Robert Fulghum changed only one rule in musical chairs: to keep all the kids in the game.

The only thing we have to change is our belief that some students deserve success and others do not. The new rule is: All students stay in. The new promise is: All students succeed. Failure is not an option.

Resources

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Maria "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., is the IDRA executive director. Dr. Robledo Montecel presented an adapted version of this article as a keynote at the National Dropout Prevention Network conference in December. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

ENLACE Initiative *- continued from page 4*

Resources

Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities. *Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, February 1999).

Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., is an administrative assistant to the IDRA executive director. Comments and questions may be sent to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

For more information about ENLACE, visit the ENLACE web page at www.idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In October, IDRA worked with **10,875** teachers, administrators and parents through **101** training and technical assistance activities and **187** program sites in **12** states plus the United Kingdom. Topics included:

- IDRA *Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program*
- Bilingualism for All: The Promise of Dual Language Programs
- Gender and Racial Bias in Curriculum
- Human Relations and Diversity Training
- *Dicho y Hecho*: Language Play and the Arts

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Blackwell Public Schools, Oklahoma
- Midland Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Texas Education Service Center, Region III
- Taos Public Schools, New Mexico
- Lafayette Parish, Louisiana

Activity Snapshot

IDRA has been working with a middle school in the Houston area to increase the cognitive growth and academic achievement for all students, including language-minority students, through an intensive language-across-the-curriculum program. Through this IDRA reading project, known as Project FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal), a task force of teachers and administrators analyzes their instructional program, learns and practices new strategies, evaluates their success and sets goals for the next year. The participants in Houston have become reinvigorated by this new instructional method that is based on three principles: active involvement, validating students and guidance. While most schools implement Project FLAIR through their own resources, the project at this Houston high-poverty, high-minority school is being sponsored by the STAR Center, which is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. The STAR Center is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/444-1710.

Why is it Important to Maintain the Native Language?

Children who speak a language other than English enter U.S. schools with abilities and talents similar to those of native English-speaking children. In addition, these children have the ability to speak another language that, if properly nurtured, will benefit them throughout their lives. In school, children who speak other languages will learn to speak, read and write English. However, unless parents and teachers actively encourage maintenance of the native language, the child is in danger of losing it and with that loss, the benefits of bilingualism. Maintaining the native language matters for the following reasons.

Personal: The child's first language is critical to his or her identity. Maintaining this language helps the child value his or her culture and heritage, which contributes to a positive self-concept.

Social: When the native language is *not* maintained, important links to family and other community members may be lost. By encouraging native language use, parents can prepare the child to interact with the native language community, both in the United States and overseas.

Intellectual: Students need uninterrupted intellectual development. When students who are not yet fluent in English switch to using only English, they are functioning at an intellectual level below their age. Interrupting intellectual development in this manner is likely to result in academic failure. However, when parents and children speak the language they know best with one another, they are both working at their actual level of intellectual maturity.

Educational: Students who learn English and continue to develop their native language have higher academic achievement in later years than do students who learn English at the expense of their first language.

Economic: Better employment opportunities in this country and overseas are available for individuals who are fluent in English and another language.

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IDRA Newsletter

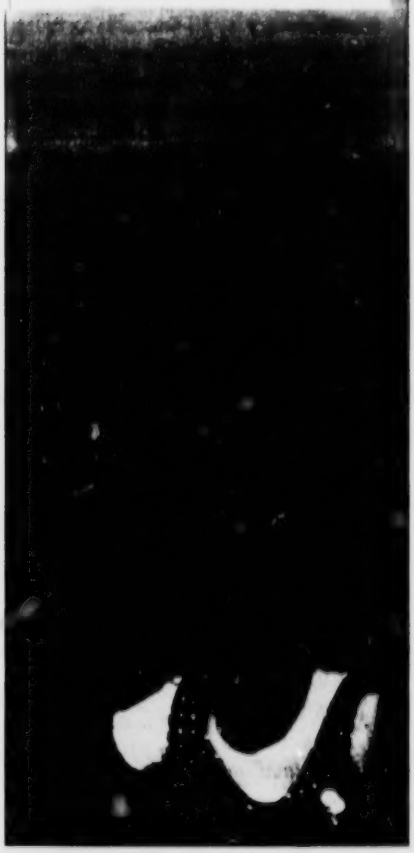
ISSN 1069-5672 Volume XXVII, No. 2 February 2000

We Should Not Kid Ourselves: Excellence Requires Equity

Bradley Scott, M.A.

Inside this Issue:

- Five goals of equity
- Comprehensive school reform
- Early childhood institute
- Troubling court ruling



Now that the century has changed, now that the millennium is dawning, now that we have been reforming and improving America's schools for a good 10 years, let us not kid ourselves. Let us admit that in order for schools to be called excellent, exemplary, blue ribbon, or models, they must work for all kinds of diverse learners. They must be producing high student outcomes for all learners regardless of race, gender, national origin and linguistic status, and economic status. If they are not, they may be *good*, but they are not *excellent*. After all, good schools have always worked for *some* students. The real issue is making schools work for *all* students.

In the February 1999, issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*, I discussed the U.S. Department of Education's expansion of the role of the 10 desegregation assistance centers. With the new label of "equity assistance centers," they can now provide technical assistance and training to support a broader set of concerns important to a school reform agenda rather than only to a school desegregation agenda. In that article, I presented the goals of educational equity.

I have received feedback from my colleagues at the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) and many people across the nation about the goals of educational equity. The South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE), the equity assistance center that is a program of IDRA and serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas (Federal Region VI), has embraced the goals of educational equity. The nine other equity assistance centers have embraced the goals as well. We were given an opportunity by the U.S. Department of Education to present the goals at the three regional *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) conferences that were held in October, November, and December of last year.

While the goals are still a work in progress, the SCCE has been using them as a framework for providing technical assistance to and becoming engaged with the school districts with which it works in federal Region VI.

The five goals of educational equity are:

1. Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes;
2. Equitable access and inclusion;
3. Equitable treatment;
4. Equitable opportunity to learn; and
5. Equitable resources.

It wisely has been suggested to me that the first goal is actually the real outcome of educational reform, and the other four goals are the conditions or objectives that must be met for the first goal to be reached. I readily accept that argument and very well may change the nomenclature. At this writing, however, I will call them all goals because each is an end or final point that must be reached if a school district is going to talk about its schools' excellence.

Since I first presented these goals one year ago, many people have asked for

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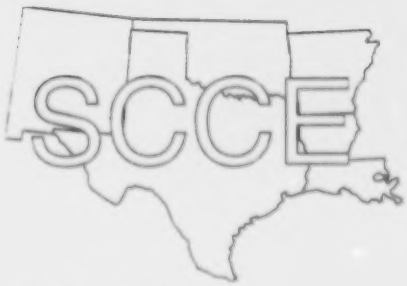
definitions and examples of the goals in action. We must take a closer look at each goal by presenting a definition for it and some issues related to it that must be addressed before we are able to answer the question, "How do we make schools work for all learners?"

Goal 1: Comparably High Academic Achievement and Other Student Outcomes

A school district or campus can be called excellent if there is comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes. The first goal is defined as follows: *As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, one sees high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners, and achievement and performance gaps are virtually nonexistent.*

Many issues must be addressed to achieve this goal. To deal with these issues, school districts and campuses must ask themselves the following.

- Are there comparably high achievement outcomes for all learners?
- Are there comparably high social outcomes for all learners, such as responsible citizenship development, problem solving, decision-making skills and life skills development?
- Are school completion rates consistently high for all diverse learners?
- Are there comparably low disciplinary referrals, suspensions and expulsions for all learners?



- Is there high literacy for all diverse learners?
- Are there comparably high rates of participation in college and/or post-secondary schooling and training, or is there competent preparation for school-to-work transitions for all learners?
- Are there violence-free, safe, supportive learning environments for all learners?
- Are engaged and involved parents of all groups of learners supporting their children's success in school?

Goal 2: Equitable Access and Inclusion

The challenge in achieving the second goal is to eradicate the barriers that prevent access and inclusion. These barriers are both overt and covert. Many times, there is an insidious, benign and naive unawareness that these barriers even exist. And so, equitable access and inclusion is defined as: *The unobstructed entrance into, involvement of and full participation of learners in schools, programs and activities within those schools.*

This definition suggests that simply getting through the door is not enough, but all learners must be able to become as fully and deeply involved in the schooling experience as they and their families choose to be. In order to create equity regarding access and inclusion, school districts and campuses must ask themselves the following.

- Do learners and their families have complete access to information in a language or form of communication that is meaningful?
- Do the assessment, course selection, and placement processes and appropriate supports exist to sustain all learners in courses and programs in an equitable manner?
- Are counseling and advisement fair and equitable for all diverse learners?
- Do the organizational structures and mechanisms of operation work to provide all learners with appropriate access and inclusion?
- Does instructional engagement really exist such that instruction is presented in a way that is culturally, linguistically and cognitively appropriate for all learners and that embraces their interests, psychological readiness and emotional preparedness?
- What is the availability, quality and use of technology by all learners, including its use in managing and presenting instruction and in accessing all the supports that Internet can provide?
- To what degree have teachers and administrators been supported to have

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The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

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Equity Principles and School Reform: What it Takes to Ensure that "All Means All"

Adela Solís, Ph.D.

School districts across the country are beginning the new century – as they spent the last half of the 1990s – engaged in rigorous efforts to reform their practices, hoping to radically reverse a persistent downward trend in student achievement, a characteristic of many schools in many states. Educators at all levels have developed performance standards for student achievement and assessment schemes to monitor and measure student learning.

Districts have also searched for and are adopting a variety of educational models that promise to positively impact all aspects of school operations and in turn cause dramatic change in student outcomes. These reform efforts, to a large extent, are advocated and financially supported through federal legislation, particularly the *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) of 1994 and the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program, begun in 1997. Both of these fund programs target minority and disadvantaged students.

An official government statement in support of these programs makes clear the focus on such students:

> Building upon and leveraging efforts to connect higher standards with school improvement...will help expand the quality and quantity of schoolwide reform efforts that enable all children, particularly low achieving children, to meet challenging academic standards (CPRE, 1998).

It is clear to educators that the aim of school reform is to help all students achieve to the highest possible standards. Those attending U.S. Department of Education conferences and meetings undoubtedly have heard officials over and over promote the motto, "All means all."

School reform is comprehensive. Publications and technical assistance materials are available to schools, especially through technical assistance and research organizations and the federal government (see box on next page). These publications delineate processes, procedures and criteria for successful school reform gleaned from extensive literature on school effectiveness and restructuring. Schoolwide planning emphasizes, as reform strategies, the importance of "good planning," including the conduct of assessments to determine programmatic needs and especially student needs. Recommended practices include crafting specific needs statements that define low performance, targeting specific curriculum to specific student needs, and disaggregating student data to better understand the performance of different groups of learners.

Comprehensive school reform assistance publications present leadership and systemic change principles as prerequisites for successful reform. For instance, the U.S. Department of Education advises schools to avoid "ad hoc" innovations and focus instead on coordination and integration. The department directs them to five "requirements" to implementing comprehensive reform:

- Articulate a vision for reform;
- Provide instructional guidance toward vision realization;
- Restructure governance and organizational structures to facilitate learning and effective service delivery;
- Provide needed resources; and
- Establish evaluation and accountability

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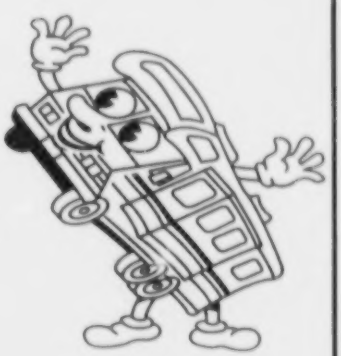

Get more information on equity and excellence!

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- ✧ Statistics, definitions, etc.
- ✧ Internet resources
- ✧ Internet links

Register for a special prize!

Answer the question of the month!
Each month we will ask a new question for readers online. A sample of responses will be printed in a later issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*.

This month's question is...

If you could do one thing that would help all students be more successful what would that be?

www.idra.org

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mechanisms that provide incentives while addressing barriers.

The CSRD program further promotes the practices of coordination and integration and pushes reform by financially supporting the adoption of "whole school, research-based" education models (NCREL, 1998). The CSRD posts nine key components that models and programs must possess:

- Effective research-based methods and strategies;
- A comprehensive design with aligned components;
- Professional development;
- Measurable goals and benchmarks linked to state standards;
- Support within the school;
- Parent and community involvement;
- External support and technical assistance;
- Evaluation strategies; and
- Coordination of federal, state and local resources.

Many more no-nonsense, promising strategies for changing schools are available to school districts.

What this Reform Guidance is Missing

The approach to improving schools outlined by the numerous strategies, some of which are cited above, is powerful and thoughtful for many reasons. It advocates systemic changes (change in all aspects of school operations). It embraces a process approach to change (including planning and comprehensive needs assessments). It is rigorous in its demand that schools focus only on practices (models) for which there is evidence of success. It calls for accountability (through evaluation) of student outcomes.

These recipes for success, however, have a shortcoming when it comes to directing the goal to reach all students. Certainly, the theme of inclusiveness has been addressed within accountability strategies, and the need to study outcomes of discrete groups has also been stated. However, an important step that this literature on reform has not taken is to clearly articulate the relationship between reform initiatives and the effort to eliminate discriminatory action in the schools. To tackle the goal of "all means all" it is necessary to clarify for all educators that the universe of nondiscriminatory practices entails, to a large extent, the cutting-edge strategies embodied in the reform initiatives. To engage in reform in this fashion is to address the all-important principle of *equity*.

Equity and School Reform Resources

Comprehensive School Reform – Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts (One Brook, Ill.: North Central Regional Laboratory, 1998).

Focus on School Improvement: A Planning Guide (San Francisco, Calif.: WestED Regional Educational Laboratory, 1996).

"From 'DAC' to 'EAC' – The Expanding Role of the Equity Assistance Center," by B. Scott, *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 1999).

Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy, by J.A. Cárdenas (Needham Heights, Mass.: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

Noteworthy Perspectives on School Reform (Aurora, Colo.: Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory, 1999).

Schoolwide Reform: A New Outlook (resource guide) (San Francisco, Calif.: WestED Regional Educational Laboratory, 1996).

Systemic Reform: Studies in Education Reform (Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

A Toolkit for Assessing and Revising the Integrated Campus Improvement and Title I Schoolwide Plan (San Antonio, Texas: STAR Center, Intercultural Development Research Association, 1997).

"Who's at the Table? Or Is there Room Enough for All?" by B. Scott, *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 1998).

The Goals and Conditions of Educational Equity

The Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE) exists to promote equity in schools and classrooms through its technical assistance services. A key issue for the SCCE has been to spread the message that meaningful school reform can only be achieved through educational practice that adheres loyally to principles of equity. Most recently, the SCCE has worked diligently (along with other equity technical assistance centers across the country) to promote clearer goals of equity and help client educators link their reform and equity efforts.

The attempt has been not only to reach schools undertaking mandated desegregation, but also to reach all schools engaged in reform, as nearly all of them enroll diverse learners who are minority, linguistically different and disadvantaged and, for many, whose achievement is not up to par with that of other students. The director of the SCCE, Bradley Scott, says the following about the motto of "All means all":

> We have evidence of programs that, either in part or in their entirety, are working for diverse learners. The greater challenge, however, is to reproduce these successes in a nation full of millions of learners, on hundreds of thousands of school campuses, in thousands of school districts (Scott, 1998).

In further discussions, he explains that the concept of educational equity entails consideration of how the differentiated characteristics of students – how students access curriculum, programs, supports and other opportunities in educational settings – must be taken into account (Scott, 1999). The message here is that working with the principle of equity – the cornerstone of the civil rights approach

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within schools and other institutions – involves understanding the more complex concept of integration. This concept embraces not just breadth of access (access to programs, opportunities, etc., to all students) but the depth of inclusion, the nature of involvement of all types of learners in all kinds of curricular offerings (Scott, 1999). Understanding this concept is key to ensuring that the lofty goal of serving all students is met. Equity advocates believe that the set of equity goals established recently by the SCCE, aid this understanding and prompt not just reform, but equitable reform.

The goals of equity specifically define key concepts of equity and enumerate specific actions and opportunities that should occur within schools and classrooms so that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve to high standards becomes possible. There are five prominent equity goals: (1) comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes; (2) equitable access and inclusion; (3) equitable treatment; (4) equitable opportunity to learn; and (5) equitable resources. These are discussed in detail on Page 1. The overall articulation of equity through the five goals expresses that what is crucial in the pursuit for educational equity is the achievement of desired results.

The first goal – comparably high achievement and other student outcomes – is the most important. It overlaps with the overarching reform objective of high standards for all. Within this context, the goal conveys that equity cannot be claimed unless it can be ascertained that children in the protected classes (specified in civil rights statutes) achieve academically at comparably high levels as other students and, subsequently, enjoy the benefits in life brought about by an excellent education. This expectation follows from the widely accepted, well established assumption that all children can learn and be successful when given a chance to do so (Cárdenas, 1995).

Linking Equity to Comprehensive School Reform Models and Programs

Another way IDRA has linked comprehensive school reform efforts to equity is to offer a framework that can help determine if models or programs for "whole school" reform (which are being promoted so intensely by national leaders as the answer to current school problems) are

Equity Principles - continued on page 11

Applying Equity Principles to School Reform Programs

Equity Principle	Indicators of model and program responsiveness to the needs of the diverse student populations	Evidence needed to demonstrate responsiveness
Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes. As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, one sees high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners, and achievement and performance gaps are virtually non-existent.	Has the model been implemented in settings with different student groups?	Describe these settings and elaborate on campus profiles with different student groups where the model has been implemented.
	Is the model's research base inclusive of research or studies of effectiveness with different student groups?	Discuss findings as they relate to other student groups addressed in this survey that form the research base for your model.
	Do school reform planning processes facilitate or include needs assessment based on disaggregated data for each of these student groups?	Describe the different student groups are addressed in the model's needs assessment processes?
	Does the training and technical assistance address the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students?	Discuss training and technical assistance activities designed to address the cultural and linguistic diversity of students.
	Does the training and technical assistance address specific characteristics and needs (in addition to linguistic and cultural) of these student populations?	Discuss these other specific student characteristics and needs addressed by the training and technical assistance in your model.
	Are assessment procedures for monitoring growth and progress modified to address the different student populations?	Describe procedures or instrumentation; also types of modifications suggested or guidance for modifications for monitoring growth and progress.
	Does the model have evaluation data or evidence of the impact that it had on the different student groups?	Describe the evaluation data or evidence and the impact that it had on the different student groups?
	Do the evaluation results show achievement gains for the different student groups that have been sustained for at least three years?	Describe the evaluation results that show these sustained achievement gains for the different student groups.
	Has the model been used successfully with significant numbers of these student groups?	Identify (name, address and contact person) schools with significant numbers of these student groups where the model has been used.
	Does the model integrate an accountability system to ensure that achievement standards and other indicators of success are met?	Describe the accountability system and how the system ensures that the different student groups achieve to high standards.

Seventh Annual

IDRA *La Semana del Niño*

Early Childhood Educators Institute™

"Educating a New Generation"

Mark your calendar: April 25-27, 2000 · San Antonio Airport Hilton

Join us for the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute as we celebrate and get ready to teach a new generation of children.

Plenary and Concurrent Sessions

The institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development concurrent sessions that are customized to the varied needs of early childhood educators and administrators. Information on any additional sessions will be available at the institute. The topics for this years' institute include innovative instructional strategies, information about policy issues, and the latest research.

School Visits

Take this opportunity to visit model early childhood centers. School visits provide you with the opportunity to share ideas while seeing them in action. Institute participants will travel to high-performing, high-minority schools in the San Antonio area that are effectively working with diverse learners. Two school visits (one each on Wednesday and Thursday) are available to the first 150 institute registrants on a first come, first served basis. Transportation will be provided.

Institute Sponsors

IDRA is pleased to bring you this Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Supporting IDRA projects include:

- IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas);
- *STAR Center* (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation);
- RE-CONNECT (the parent information and resource center that serves Texas), and
- Mobilization for Equity (a project funded by the Ford Foundation through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students to engage the public and parents in achieving the best possible education for all students).

Each of these IDRA projects provides specialized training and technical assistance to public schools. Information on how your campus can use these resources to improve instruction and assessment will be available at the institute and may also be obtained by calling IDRA at 210/444-1710 or by visiting IDRA's web site (www.idra.org).

Conference Topics...

Policy
- Early childhood education in the new century: Opportunities for all students
- The role of early childhood education in creating a nation of learners – reflecting on the national education goals

Literacy
- Including fantasy and imagination in the early childhood curriculum
- The language, the teacher and the child: Integrating a harmonious whole
- Creating literacy opportunities at home
- Effective instructional strategies for reluctant young readers

Social Development
- Children's literature: A tool to develop social skills in the early childhood classroom

Child Development
- Developing language, thoughts and values in the early childhood classroom

Multicultural Education
- The use of authentic literature in the classroom: Sharing our values

Curriculum
- Integrating fine arts in the early childhood program: A project approach

Play
- The child's right to play

Research
- Minority students: The latest research regarding their education and their opportunities
- Diversity in the classroom: Implications for the child

Classroom Management
- Managing learning centers

Hotel Information

The institute will be held at the San Antonio Airport Hilton. The hotel is offering a special rate of $95 per night for a single or double room (plus state and local taxes), based on availability. The hotel reservation deadline for the reduced rate is April 10, 2000. Call 1-800-HILTONS to make reservations. Be sure to reference the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute in order to qualify for the special rate.

Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute™
Registration Form

YES I will attend the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute on April 25-27, 2000. (Please use one form per person. Feel free to make copies of this form.)

Name _____

School or Organization _____

Title/Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____

E-mail _____

$ _____ Total enclosed PO # _____

Register **online** with a purchase order number at *www.idra.org*

Mail with a check or purchase order to IDRA at 5835 Callaghan Road, #350 San Antonio, TX 78228-1190 Attention: Carol Chavez

Fax with a purchase order to IDRA at 210-444-1714 Attention: Carol Chavez

Fees

___ $175 Institute registration (includes institute sessions, Thursday luncheon and [for first 150 registrants] two school visits) – *$195 if after March 1, 2000*

Make payable to: Intercultural Development Research Association. A purchase order number may be used to reserve space. Full payment prior to the institute is expected.

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Educating the Next Generation

Experience the magic of San Antonio at Fiesta. Join the celebration and spend a few days here for professional development and leadership sessions. IDRA is delighted to host the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Explore new skills and insights through exciting sessions featuring early childhood experts and school site visits showcasing innovative programs for the youngest of diverse learners. This year we are jumping into a new era of quality education for language-minority students and their families. This professional development event is open to early childhood educators, administrators and parents.

Special Events

Bookfair

IDRA has collaborated with the San Antonio Public Library to bring together an all-day bookfair that will feature the latest in bilingual and Latino children's literature. The bookfair will also showcase readings by authors of children's literature including Diana Gonzales Bertrand with her popular book, *Sip, Slurp, Soup, Soup, Caldo, Caldo, Caldo*.

Parent Institute:
Parent Leaders for the Next Generation

This one-day event on Thursday will concentrate on the challenges in early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. Parents and educators will dialogue on ways to focus their leadership to enhance early childhood learning.

Video Conference on Family Issues

Wednesday, April 26, 2000
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CST

In addition to the institute in San Antonio, parents, community liaisons and community resource personnel across the state will come together to celebrate the International Week of the Young Child through special sessions on early childhood education methods and practices via a statewide video conference. IDRA lead trainer, Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., will lead the long distance conversation focusing on parent leadership and outreach – parent leadership based on listening, outreach and coaching of potential leaders. The video conference will be held on April 26, 2000, at participating Texas regional education service centers. If you are interested in attending at your local video conference site and cannot attend the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute, contact Yojani Hernandez at IDRA (210/444-1710) for details.

Special Session

Regina M. Benjamin, M.D.

Dr. Benjamin is a medical practitioner in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. In 1995, she became the first young physician (under age 40) elected to the American Medical Association (AMA) board of trustees, as well as its first African American woman. She currently serves as president of the AMA Education and Research Foundation. Dr. Benjamin has been in private practice, worked in emergency rooms and nursing homes, operated a rural health clinic, and spent time as a medical missionary in Honduras. She was recognized in Time magazine as one of the "Nation's 50 Future Leaders Age 40 and Under," and as a "Person of the Week" on ABC's World News Tonight with Peter Jennings. Dr. Benjamin will be discussing the effects of using ritalin with young, hyper-active students and promising alternatives for such cases.

Featuring

Diane Gonzales Bertrand

Ms. Diane Gonzales Bertrand was selected as a National Hispanic Scholar in 1991 and has been recognized as an outstanding educator and advocate for literacy by the San Antonio Youth Literacy Council and the Upward Bound Program. Ms. Gonzales Bertrand is currently the Writer-in-Residence at St. Mary's University in San Antonio where she teaches creative writing and English composition. She is a nationally recognized writer of novels, picture books and poetry.

Bertha Perez, Ed.D.

Dr. Bertha Perez is a tenured professor of education and bicultural bilingual studies and is associate dean for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the downtown campus of the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a nationally and internationally recognized consultant and has worked with issues of cultural and linguistic diversity with groups throughout the United States, Latin America, Spain and China.

Gloria Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez is founder, national president and CEO of AVANCE, Inc., and author of *Raising Nuestros Niños: Bringing Up Latino Children in a Bicultural World*. Dr. Rodriguez has been recognized both locally and nationally and has been invited to speak and present testimony throughout the country. She was a delegate to the White House Conference on Families and, by presidential appointment, served as part of the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations International Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Education Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Bradley Scott

Mr. Bradley Scott is an IDRA senior education associate and director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE). Serving school districts in Federal Region VI – Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas – the SCCE helps to create schools that work for all children by protecting their civil rights and guaranteeing their equal educational opportunities. On Tuesday morning, he will welcome the participants to begin a week of learning, exploring, and professional growth for us all.

At a Glance

Tuesday, April 25, 2000

Morning session led by Mr. Bradley Scott, IDRA senior education associate and director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE). A series of concurrent sessions will be held in the morning and again in the afternoon. Participants present papers. Dr. Gloria Rodriguez will be the keynote speaker at the closing session.

Wednesday, April 26, 2000

School visits in the morning or attend an opening session featuring Carol Whelin who will be modeling art activities in the classroom. An all-day bookfair will also be featured. Ms. Diane Gonzales Bertrand will be the keynote speaker at the closing session. At another location, hundreds of early childhood educators from across the state will be linked to share a long-distance conversation via video conference focused on parent leadership and outreach. The evening will host a reading forum on Project FLAIR.

Thursday, April 27, 2000

School visits in the morning with a choice of attending the technology fair or parent leadership workshop for those who do not visit schools. A morning session will feature Dr. Regina Benjamin and her discussion on the effects of and alternatives to using ritalin on young, hyper-active students. The institute will close with a luncheon featuring keynote speaker Dr. Bertha Perez, associate dean for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the downtown campus of University of Texas at San Antonio.

Institute

Tuesday, April 25, 2000
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Registration opens at 8:00 a.m.
Luncheon at noon.

Wednesday, April 26, 2000
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Lunch is on your own.

Thursday, April 27, 2000
8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Luncheon at noon.

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Excellence Requires - continued from page 2

high expectations and positive attitudes about their students and their right to unobstructed, unrestricted opportunities for access and inclusion?

- Are there appropriate monitoring and accountability measures established to address discrimination that denies access and full inclusion?
- Do school-parent-community partnerships exist and foster full access and engagement for parents and community people in the process of excellent schooling?
- Are these collaborations among school, home and community, assets-based so that all partners become engaged from their positions of strength as equals rather than as members in deficit model school-home interactions?

Goal 3: Equitable Treatment

As with the previous goal, issues of treatment are very often clouded by people's inability to see how their interactions with others may be filtered through negative attitudes, prejudices, lack of information and ignorance, and/or benign non-awareness. Actions that flow from such positions may also appear to be insensitive and disrespectful even when no such intention exists. This pattern of interaction must be addressed. Equitable treatment, therefore, is defined as: *Patterns of interaction between individuals and within an environment characterized by acceptance, valuing, respect, support, safety and security such that students feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger or disregard.*

Regarding issues of equitable student treatment, districts and campuses must ask themselves the following.

- What is the environment and culture of cross-cultural interaction?
- What assessments or surveys have been conducted to determine people's attitudes, perceptions, expectations and prejudices about racially and culturally different people?
- Are education for diversity and multicultural education as well as training for justice and equality occurring for staff, students and parents?
- Is training provided for staff, students and parents in prejudice reduction, non-discrimination, and the eradication of racism, sexism and classism?
- Is training and development being provided in areas such as problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, interpersonal and cross-cultural communication?
- Does the staff work to create the four conditions for positive intergroup contact including equal status, knowledge and acquaintanceship, common goal, and institutional support?
- Does the staff have the knowledge and expertise to apply its understanding of the four conditions across all diverse student populations?
- Does the staff create and implement plans for decreasing isolation, separation, and segregation between and among racially and culturally different students?
- Does staff work to create and implement learning environments that are racially and culturally fair and free of racial and gender bias and hostility?
- Do the interactions of all individuals – including staff, students and parents – reflect sensitivity to and respect for the language, cultural and class differences of others?
- What is the evidence of equitable support, treatment, assistance and guidance given to students, parents and staff?
- If such a plan exists, how comprehensive is the plan for the management of equity?

Goal 4: Equitable Opportunity to Learn

There are those who find this fourth area too difficult to address because it boils down to a philosophical belief about the value of all learners regardless of their race.

Excellence Requires - continued on page 9

Five Goals of Educational Equity

Goal 1: Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes.

As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, one sees high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners, and achievement and performance gaps are virtually non-existent.

Goal 2: Equitable access and inclusion.

The unobstructed entrance into, involvement of and full participation of learners in schools, programs and activities within those schools.

Goal 3: Equitable treatment.

Patterns of interaction between individuals and within an environment characterized by acceptance, valuing, respect, support, safety and security such that students feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger or disregard.

Goal 4: Equitable opportunity to learn.

At minimum, the creation of learning opportunities so that every child, regardless of characteristics and identified needs, is presented with the challenge to reach high standards and are given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional and psychological supports to achieve the high standards of excellence that are established.

Goal 5: Equitable resources.

Funding, staffing and other resources for equity-based excellence that are manifested in the existence of equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible.

Excellence Requires - continued from page 8

gender, national origin and economic status. Some people, by their actions, demonstrate their belief that not all learners have a right to receive a quality, equitable education. There are systems and institutional practices that reflect a philosophical belief that some students do not deserve a real opportunity to learn.

Clearly, if excellent schools are to exist, they will only do so because of their ability to provide each student with an equitable opportunity to learn. For this reason, an equitable opportunity to learn is defined as: *At a minimum, the creation of learning opportunities so that every child, regardless of characteristics and identified needs, is presented with the challenge to reach high standards and are given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional and psychological supports to achieve the high standards of excellence that are established.*

Good schools have always worked for some students. The real issue is making schools work for *all* students.

Once again, there are tough questions and issues that a district or a campus must be willing to answer regarding the opportunity given to all learners regardless of race, gender, national origin and economic circumstance. A district must ask itself the following.

- Is every learner presented with high-powered, challenging curriculum that is race, gender and class bias-free as well as the appropriate form of instruction to make that curriculum comprehensible?
- Do the instruction methods and materials support all students' opportunity to learn and to achieve?
- How are inappropriate instructional barriers and practices – such as tracking and ability grouping, inappropriate assessment and placement decisions, and inadequate guidance and counseling – that may prevent or impede some students' opportunity to learn addressed and eradicated?
- Are research-based instructional models and practices employed to open up and expand the opportunity to learn for all students?
- To what extent is it evident that literacy, bi-literacy and multi-literacy is advocated, supported and reflected in the process of instructional implementation?
- How is technology integrated into management and instruction of education and how is it made available to all learners in an equitable manner?
- To what extent are new and emerging constructs for teaching and learning being fully integrated into every student's opportunity to learn including issues such as brain research, multiple intelligences and new intelligences?
- To what extent have new constructs about learning communities ("what school is" and "where school is") been integrated into what is done at the local level to ensure that the opportunity to learn does not mean to learn only in one kind of place in one kind of way?
- How are decisions about what needs to be learned and how well things must be learned tempered with decisions about how opportunities for such learning are made available to all kinds of students?
- How is staff development being reshaped to reflect 21st century teaching, learning and issues of the growing diversity of students?

We already have enough evidence to know that more schools can work better for more kinds of learners if that is what we believe, want and intend to have happen.

Goal 5: Equitable Resources

This final goal is directly tied to the proceeding one. We cannot begin to talk about the opportunity to learn without discussing how resources – including money, time, personnel, facilities, materials, and academic and other supports – are distributed to ensure that no matter where students are, they receive the resources they require to support their expected success and excellence in school performance. Thus, equitable resources is defined as:

Funding, staffing and other resources for equity-based excellence that are manifested in the existence of equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible.

In order for a district or campus to achieve equitable distribution of resources, it must ask the following.

- What are the beliefs, attitudes and practices around school finance equity, including resource allocation, distribution, sources of funding (i.e., hard or soft; local or state and federal), timeliness and appropriateness of funding (i.e., resources when they are needed, where they are needed)?
- How are issues of inter-district and intra-district comparability addressed so that there is an equitable distribution of resources to all campuses within a district such that the students of all schools receive the supports they need to achieve at expected levels of excellence regardless of where the students are in a district or the schools those students attend?
- What are the philosophical beliefs and the social and community practices, political policies and actions that become apparent when issues arise regarding equal funding versus equitable funding for education, per pupil expenditures, and weighted funding allocations?
- How are facilities, their maintenance, care, rejuvenation, upkeep, and resource utilization patterns established and implemented to support all learners?
- How is the issue of resource sustainability addressed for those programs and activities that address the special characteristics of learners (i.e., language characteristics, special programs for girls in math and science, supplemental support for low-income learners)?
- What decisions are made about staff assignments and experience, staff and human resource development, and teacher certification?

How then do we make schools work for all children? The answer is not a simple one. Somewhere within the answer to that question lies an appropriate answer for all of the proceeding questions and others that were not raised. When a district or

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campus answers these questions, it must be able to show evidence. It will be better when they show evidence over time rather than just for one year. Sustainability over time seems to be grounds for calling a district, a campus, or a program excellent: that is, it works for all learners over time.

There are examples of such places and spaces that exist throughout the nation. The recent IASA conferences highlighted many such campuses and programs. There are examples that are currently being studied that are on their way to becoming excellent. These are good programs that are working to become excellent programs.

Does a district, campus or program have to be perfect to be considered excellent? I hardly think so. At best, we are imperfect beings trying to reach perfection. What these districts, campuses and programs must do is work comparably well for all kinds of diverse learners, moving them to high achievement and other student outcomes. This is our challenge. We already have enough evidence to know that more schools can work better for more kinds of learners if that is what we believe, want and intend to have happen. I think a part of the answer also lies in more of us really believing, wanting, intending and acting like that is what we want to have happen.

This is important. We can only begin to imagine how important it is. I have said more than once that we have to act as if our very future depends on equity in education because, in truth, it does.

I was talking to Sarah Aleman, an IDRA staff member who does a lot of the graphic development at IDRA. I asked her about what image I could use to capture the inseparable, undeniable, irrefutable point that excellence *requires* equity. She asked me what I really wanted to convey. I said I wanted to convey a message that excellence implies equity. She said that once I come up with the right analogy, she could develop the right graphic.

One analogy I had in mind was a house called "excellence" that has four walls and a roof. The four walls are labeled equitable access and inclusion, equitable treatment, equitable opportunity to learn, and equitable distribution of resources. The roof is labeled comparable high academic achievement and other student outcomes.

A second analogy I had in mind was a car, the *Excellent* model, being powered by gasoline called equity.

The third was a symbol that represents a combination of the words excellence and equity such as *excelequity* or *equexcellence*.

The last analogy I thought of was a mirror with "Excellence" looking into it and the reflection "Equity" looking back.

Sarah said, "Why don't you just tell people that excellence and equity go hand in hand?" If the message is clear and strong enough, it will create its own image. Sarah was right.

Resources

Scott, B. "From 'DAC' to 'EAC' – The Expanding Role of the Equity Assistance Center," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 1999) pp. 5, 8.

Bradley Scott, M.A. is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. He directs the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Internet Web Sites on Excellence and Equity

Advocacy and Educational Equity

Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org/index.html
Diversity University, Inc. 128.18.101.106
Equity Assistance Centers www.ed.gov/EdRes/EdFed/equity.html
ERIC Clearinghouse – Rural Education and Small Schools
www.ael.org/eric
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
Low-Income Communities in the Information Age
www.benton.org/Library/Low-Income
Making Schools Work for Every Child equity.enc.org
National Coalition of Advocates for Students www.ncas1.org
IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity www.idra.org
Urban Education Web eric-web.tc.columbia.edu
Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering
www.ai.mit.edu/people/ellens/Gender/wom_and_min.html

Multicultural Education

Amigos www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/amigos
A Survey of Children on Race in the Media
www.childrennow.org/media/mc98/DiffWorld.html
I-EARN Indigenous Global Art Project www.iearn.org/au/fp/art
Institute for Global Communications www.igc.org/igc
Multicultural Book Review www.isomedia.com/homes/jmele/homepage.html
Multiculturalism in Our Schools
edweb.sdsu.edu/people/CMathison/truths/truths.html
Tales of Wonder darsie.ucdavis.edu/tales
Teaching to Change the World - Jeannie Oakes
www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/oakes
Virtual Library on Migration & Ethnic Relations www.ercomer.org/wwwvl

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

Equity Principles - continued from page 5

aligned with needs of minority disadvantaged students. This framework includes a set of questions that helps adopters examine a model's history of implementation with diverse learners and the relevance of its strategies to these learners.

Evidence must be provided longitudinally and in a disaggregated manner to demonstrate success with the specific student populations. This approach supports the first equity goal and is central to linking equity and school reform. Educators reforming their schools through the implementation of one or more such whole school models would benefit from applying this framework to assess their model's alignment with this most critical equity principle (see box on Page 5).

The concept of educational equity must be the driving force to protect the rights of children in public schools. The five educational equity goals hold the most promise in ensuring that minority disadvantaged children are included in efforts to assist all students learn to the highest possible standards. The way to equity is for all schools to follow the equity goals presented here. It is especially crucial to realize that the research-based promising strategies in reform programs are what equity advocates expect to better serve diverse students' special needs. Equally important is that educators work knowing that for these students results also matter. In order to claim success, reform programs must first provide evidence that offerings have significantly touched *every single* child in its schools.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A. *Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy* (Needham Heights, Mass.: Simon and Schuster, 1995) pp. 20-34; pp. 99-105.

Consortium for Policy Research in Education. "States and Districts and Comprehensive School Reform." *CPRE Policy Briefs* (Philadelphia, Penn.: CPRE, May 1998) RB-24, pg. 8.

North Central Regional Education Laboratory. *Changing by Design – Comprehensive School Reform: An Introduction to Implementation* (One Brook, Ill.: NCREL, 1998).

Scott, B. "Who's at the Table? Or Is there Room Enough for All?" *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 1998) pp. 13-14.

Scott, B. "From 'DAC' to 'EAC' – The Expanding Role of the Equity Assistance Center," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 1999) pp. 5, 8.

Adela Solis, Ph.D. is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In November and December, IDRA worked with **8,849** teachers, administrators and parents through **85** training and technical assistance activities and **187** program sites in **15** states plus the United Kingdom. Topics included:

- Title VII System Program Evaluation
- Parent Leadership Development
- Cooperative Learning Demonstrations
- ESL Sheltered English Using CALLA Strategies
- Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Truth or Consequences Public Schools, New Mexico
- Texas Education Service Center, Region XVII
- Dallas Public Schools, Texas
- South San Antonio Independent School District, Texas
- Los Angeles County Office of Education, California

Activity Snapshot

The only campus in a particular school district in Oklahoma that was providing Spanish and English instruction to its students requested assistance in preparing its staff and teachers. The IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity*, developed training sessions on multiple intelligences for the campus' trainer of staff. The center also worked with school staff to develop lessons at each grade level with activities using the seven ways children process information. The South Central Collaborative for Equity is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Title IV) to service the educational equity needs of federal Region VI (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) in the areas of race, gender, and national origin desegregation.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/444-1710.

TAAS Ruling Troubling

María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

Editor's Note: On January 7, 2000, a federal court ruled against the MALDEF lawsuit regarding the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The following is a statement by Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, executive director of the Intercultural Development Research Association, in response to the ruling.

We are extremely disappointed by Judge Prado's ruling today. In his opinion, he stated: "The court has determined that the use of the TAAS examination does not have impermissible adverse impact on Texas' minority students." IDRA is deeply troubled at his suggestion that there is *permissible* adverse impact. IDRA has historically understood that *all children are valuable, none is expendable.*

The original purpose of the TAAS to hold schools accountable for excellence and equity in children's education has served the children of Texas well. The high-stakes nature of the TAAS – using the test as a requirement for high school graduation or as the sole criterion for retention and promotion decisions – is where Texas went astray. Because they are more likely to attend schools with inadequate resources, minority and low-income students have borne the brunt of the consequences.

IDRA commends MALDEF for attempting to resolve this injustice and for MALDEF's long-time commitment to the education of children, particularly minority children in Texas. Given the present focus on student performance, the state of Texas has developed a line of defense that assumes that resources are adequate, everything done by the school is proper and if a student fails to learn, the student and only the student must be held accountable. Thus, students have become scapegoats for educational failure.

The TAAS (and similar tests) should not be used as a sole criterion for determining success or graduation. A student with perfect attendance, completing all required courses, having the prescribed number of electives, making no grade lower than an "A" in high school, and attaining a perfect score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) cannot graduate and receive a diploma if the TAAS score is below a certain level. Furthermore, the TAAS is not a valid measure since there is no way that the content of the test can be adjusted to represent the curriculum actually experienced by the student. It is dysfunctional and unfair to measure student competence in content that was not taught. IDRA supports approaches that use multiple factors such as coursework and grades to determine promotion and graduation.

Considering the limitation of the TAAS and the inability to determine who is responsible for poor performance, the diploma-denial penalty on the student is too severe and long-lasting. Students having met all graduation requirements other than passing the TAAS may spend the rest of their lives in a form of limbo.

To have a successful education system across the state, we must consider more than student performance (outputs) as determined by a single test. Clearly, the gains among minority and low-income students are the result of more than a TAAS-based accountability system. These gains are the result of multiple variables, including long fights for equitable school funding and decreased class size. We must ensure that adequate resources are provided (inputs) and that those resources are used appropriately (processes).

Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus: Accountability

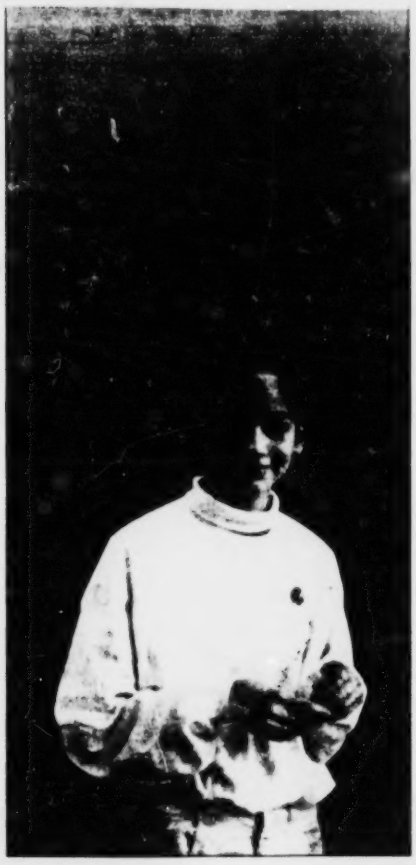
ISSN 1069-5672 *Volume XXVII, No. 3 March 2000*

Why Better Isn't Enough: A Closer Look at TAAS Gains

Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

Inside this Issue:

- Statewide TAAS data analysis
- Gender equity report card
- New resource for the classroom
- Early childhood institute



Education advocates around the United States have been told to look to Texas for evidence that education reform can indeed lead to improved student achievement. People are taking note of improved Texas academic achievement test scores, particularly gains reflected in the state's student assessment system. National studies have noted that Texas students, both majority and minority, have performed at levels above those of similar students from comparable states.

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) has examined much of the data on which those claims are based and can concur that, indeed the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) – the state testing measure – seems to reflect an overall improvement in student achievement. This upward trend has included all students and all grade levels.

Decades of Reforms Begin to Pay Off

Before proceeding to a detailed discussion of the improved test scores however, it is important to remember the major educational reforms in Texas over the last decade that caused much of this improvement. It is also important to note that no single reform can account for the improvements noted in Texas public schools. Rather, the progress came about as a result of the combined effects of a number of distinct education reforms.

Much of the broad improvement in Texas student performance is the result **improvements made possible by increases in state funding** for elementary and secondary public education. Dating back to the adoption of House Bill 72 in 1984, Texas has increased state funding by over $7.5 billion. This additional money has resulted in upgrades in the state's basic educational program, providing additional opportunities for all school systems to improve their staff, materials, and other areas that impact the quality of instruction being provided to Texas students.

In a second reform area worth noting, Texas provided **supplemental funding** that was based on the numbers and types of **"special needs" pupils** being served in districts. In House Bill 72, the state created a system of funding "weights" that were calculated as an add-on based on funding provided to the regular foundation program. The actual amounts that were received by schools were based on the number of special needs pupils being served by special programs. *Special needs students* are those who are gifted and talented, are served in special education classes, are in low-income families, or are limited-English-proficient. These supplemental special student population funds in turn enabled school systems to focus additional resources to better serve these pupils.

While additional funding was one contributing factor for improved school performance, organizations such as IDRA, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the South Central Collaborative for Equity (the equity assistance center at IDRA that serves Texas and surrounding states) and others that sup-

TAAS Gains – continued on page 2

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ported equalization of public school funding, point to the act of **ensuring that the monies provided were equitably distributed** as another cornerstone of key Texas educational reforms. It took a series of state court rulings to move the state legislature to revise its public school funding schemes to enable all schools to have more comparable educational resources. The fact that lower-wealth schools were finally able to offer better quality educational programs – long taken for granted in the state's more affluent suburbs – has contributed significantly to the overall improvement of student achievement throughout most of the state.

Credit for improved student performance can also be ascribed to the development of **uniform state curriculum standards** that reflected high expectations for all students. The creation of these state standards clarified what was expected from schools and students and served to create a uniform curriculum that facilitated cross-school and cross-district comparisons. The existence of a uniform curriculum led to the creation of a new state accountability system that enabled policy-makers and the public to measure individual district and state-level progress toward meeting those standards.

These curriculum standards also facilitated the development of state school **performance standards that were integrated into the state's school accountability system**. Incorporating comprehensive reporting and accountability requirements that not only aggregate numbers of all pupils, but also include and give equal weight to the performance of subgroups of students (e.g., low-income, ethnic minorities) have contributed greatly to raising the levels of student performance across the state.

No single reform can account for the improvements noted in Texas public schools. Rather, the progress came about as a result of the combined effects of a number of distinct education reforms.

Ongoing state attention to **stronger credentialing of school personnel** (reflected in the creation of the new Educator Certification Board) and requiring ongoing updating of professional skills are also acknowledged as factors that may be contributing to improved student performance. Additionally, the state's decision to limit and provide funding for **reducing class sizes**, particularly at the lower elementary school levels, and its commitment to providing **pre-school opportunities to students most in need** are also seen as crucial education reform initiatives begun over a decade ago, that are now paying dividends.

Though the state now prides itself on the national perception that it is a leader in education reform that produces impressive student outcomes, those close to the Texas education scene will attest to the fact that many of the reforms discussed above were forced on state leaders, some by court mandates (like funding equalization) and some through the intense efforts of advocates who strongly believed in the efficacy of their reforms (class size reduction and early childhood programs). Whatever the motivation or origin for the changes, many of the tumultuous reforms that occurred in Texas seem to be producing results – at least in some areas.

Overall TAAS Passing Rates

The data presented in the box on Page 6 summarize statewide student performance on the TAAS for grades three through eight and grade 10 for the 1994 to 1999 school years. These data reflect the within grade level group gains achieved by Texas students in each of the grades tested. They allow for a comparison of improvement for each of the major subgroups of Texas pupils for whom data is gathered and reported.

The table summarizes TAAS performance for Texas pupils over a five-year period. The data reflect the percentage of pupils passing the TAAS within each grade in which the TAAS was administered. For example, in 1994, 56 percent of third grade students taking the TAAS achieved a passing score on the exam. In 1996, 67 percent of those tested in third grade passed, and in 1999, 78 percent of third graders had passing scores. The bottom row of the table reflects the net gain or increase in the percentage of pupils passing the TAAS at each grade level. Thus for third graders, the number of TAAS passers increased from a low of 56 percent in 1994 to a high of 78 percent in 1999, or a 22-point gain for that grade level over the five-year period summarized on the table.

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The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, ©2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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Math and Science Get C+ on Report Card on Gender Equity

Twenty-five years ago, former Senator Birch Bayh introduced a measure designed to end the myriad of discriminatory practices confronting women and girls in educational institutions. This provision, enacted as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, is the federal mandate against sex discrimination in education. Using the broadest terms possible, Congress intended to assure that girls and women no longer would be constrained by "corrosive and unjustified" gender bias in education, signaling loudly and clearly that the days when gender dictated educational opportunities in schools, colleges, or universities receiving taxpayer dollars were over.

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Title IX's enactment, it is fitting to assess the nation's progress toward Congress' goal of ending sex discrimination in education. From today's vantage point, there is no question that Title IX has had a significant impact on women and girls...

Twenty-five years later, educational opportunities for girls and women have increased, thanks to Title IX, but there is room for improvement. As this progress report makes clear, Title IX has helped women and girls make strides in gaining access to higher education, athletics programming and other areas, such as science and engineering. But many barriers remain... We owe it to our daughters to improve our performance on Title IX by removing these obstacles.

Math and Science

The enactment of Title IX 25 years ago removed many barriers to women and girls in the non-traditional fields of math and science, areas critical to their success in an increasingly technological world. However, disparities based on gender still exist in achievement and participation rates in these disciplines. Gender differences in math and science start small and grow as students reach secondary school, where boys outperform girls on standardized tests and participate in math and science classes at higher rates. In post-secondary schools, young men go on to major in math and the sciences in rates that exceed those of young women, many of whom are shut out of the career opportunities these fields can provide.

Progress Toward Gender Equity	
Access to Higher Education	B-
Athletics	C
Career Education	C
Employment	C-
Learning Environment	C-
Math and Science	C+
Sexual Harassment	D+
Standardized Testing	C
Treatment of Pregnant and Parenting Teens	C+

Grading Scale

A - Equitable: Gender and other areas of diversity are respected and affirmed.
B - Substantial Progress: Elimination of most gender-based barriers.
C - Some Progress: Some barriers addressed, but more improvements are necessary.
D - Little Progress: Significant gender-based barriers remain.
F - Failure: No progress in 25 years.

– "Title IX at 25 – Report Card on Gender Equity" (June 1997), National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education.

Did You Know?

Title IX of the Education Amendments

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." – 20 U.S.C. Section 1681

- **The gender gap persists in girls' science and math achievement as measured by the NAEP, starting small in elementary school, and increasing in high school.**
- **In high-stakes tests, such as the math SAT, large gaps persist, with girls scoring 35 points less than boys.**
- **Female students' low participation rates in math and science classes decline as they advance in higher education.**

Exclusion and Underachievement

Before Title IX, educators, guided by stereotypes that girls could not achieve in math and science, sometimes steered high school girls from higher-level math and science classes and frequently excluded them from extracurricular activities such as science and math clubs. Not surprisingly, girls' achievement in science and math courses was lower than that of their male counterparts.

Science: The 1969-70 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) of the country's students in science found grade school and middle school boys outscored girls by an average 5 points; in

Math and Science - continued on page 4

Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and Maria Aurora Yánez, M.A.

A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

We must ensure that minority girls are not left behind as progress is made toward narrowing gender and racial gaps in math and science education. This is an innovative resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists.

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- The opportunity to use this guide to plan with other teachers, from other departments, using the stories of these inspirational women as the basis for cross-curricular lessons for students.

"Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

(**Student Workbook** ISBN 1-878550-67-5; 2000; 32 pages; paperback; $6.50)
(**Teacher's Guide** ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

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Math and Science *- continued from page 3*

high school, the gap increased to 17 points. Today, the disturbing pattern persists, but the high school gap has shrunken to 11 points, thanks in part to Title IX. Performance levels also vary by gender. Among eighth graders, the 1977 NAEP found 14 percent of boys performing at the highest levels, compared to only 9 percent of girls, a 5-point gap. In high school, the gap grew to a yawning 21 points, with 61 percent of senior boys performing at the highest levels, compared to only 40 percent of senior girls. The past 25 years have done little to close the gap: 1994 NAEP data (more recent NAEP data use different measures and therefore cannot be compared easily against 1970s data) recorded the same 10-point gap for eighth graders and an only slightly improved 19-point gap for high school students.

Math: Just as in the case of science, the gender gap in math starts out small in early grades and grows by high school. The 1973 NAEP found that girls narrowly outscored boys at the fourth- and eighth-grade levels; by high school, however, girls had fallen behind by 8 points. By 1994 girls had lost their early edge but had moved up in high school to within 5 points of boys.

Performance levels vary by gender in math, just as in science. In 1978, 10 percent of senior boys performed at the highest math level, compared to 5 percent of senior girls. This gap also has narrowed: 1994 NAEP data measured the gap of high math proficiency at 3 points. However, on high-stakes tests, such as the SAT, the gap is much greater. Although girls' performance on the math SAT has improved somewhat, College Board data show boys still outscored girls by 35 points in 1996, compared to 44 points in 1972.

The persistence of the gender gap in high school – and its tendency to grow as students advance in grade – continues to be a subject of great concern. This gap continues in higher education and in careers in math- and science-related fields. According to the American Association of University Women, gender differences in confidence – students' belief in their ability to learn and

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perform well – correlate strongly with interest in math and science. Girls doubt their confidence in math and science more often than do boys.

Participation Rates

Girls' participation rates have unquestionably increased since the passage of Title IX. For example, as recently as 1986, only 8 percent of high school senior girls had taken physics compared to 14 percent of boys; 39 percent of senior girls had taken chemistry compared to 42 percent of boys. By 1994, 16 percent of high school senior girls had taken physics and 55 percent had taken chemistry. And schools can no longer stop girls from taking part in math- and science-related extracurricular activities.

However, female students' participation rates decline once they enter post-secondary institutions, and steadily decrease as degree level increases. For example, in 1994:

- In biology, women received 51 percent of bachelor's degrees, but only 41 percent of doctoral degrees.
- In computer sciences, women received 28 percent of bachelor's degrees, 26 percent of master's degrees, and 15 percent of doctoral degrees.
- Women's participation in engineering stays small and shrinks, with women receiving 15 percent of bachelor's degrees, 15 percent of master's degrees, and 11 percent of doctoral degrees.

The drop in female students' participation rates in math and science likely is due, in part, to the hostile environment they encounter in these fields. Women students frequently are regarded as tokens in math or science and excluded from full participation in laboratory and field work, or experience sexual and gender-based harassment in these settings.

In addition, research shows that girls lag behind in computer usage. Although more girls in school are using computers for homework and telecommunicating, extracurricular activities such as computer clubs and contests are still overwhelmingly male. Although software companies are now marketing to girls, the games often rely on sexist plots such as mall shopping and nabbing a boyfriend. Although more girls are taking lower-level computing courses, only 16 percent of Advanced Placement computer science test takers are girls. We still have a long way to go.

Steps Forward

Teaching methods already exist to encourage and engage all students and to otherwise decrease or eliminate the gender gaps in math and science. However, educators and administrators must begin to employ these teaching methods in earlier grades if the gender gap is to disappear. Further, educators and administrators must look for ways to encourage girls to pursue math and science while in secondary school so that more women will enter these fields in college and pursue related careers.

This article is excerpted from "Title IX at 25: Report Card on Gender Equity" (June 1997) with permission from the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education. Copies of the full report are available from the National Women's Law Center (202-588-5180).

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In January, IDRA worked with **8,139** teachers, administrators and parents through **53** training and technical assistance activities and **206** program sites in **11** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- K-12 Transitions and Alignment
- *Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal* – IDRA Project FLAIR
- The Impact of Vouchers on Public Schools
- Meeting the Needs of Language-Minority Students

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Bryan Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Woodward Public Schools, Oklahoma
- Orleans Parish, Louisiana
- Northside ISD, San Antonio, Texas
- Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools, New Mexico
- Union Public Schools, Oklahoma

Activity Snapshot

The STAR Center created the *Excellence and Equity through Technology Network* (EETNet) to help teachers and administrators increase their technology planning capability, establishing a network of project schools and increasing the knowledge base of these educators to prepare all children for an Internet civilization. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. The center targeted 28 high poverty and high minority schools in Texas. Through EETNet, teachers and technology coordinators from more than 23 school districts implementing Title I schoolwide projects have received ongoing technical assistance and training in increasing achievement for their students through innovative instruction enhanced by effective use of technology. Of the participating school teams that completed and submitted grant proposals based on their technology plans, all were successfully funded. The STAR Center is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

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TAAS Gains – continued from page 2

In examining the passing rates across the grade levels over the time span, we note that all grade levels reflect greater percentages of pupils passing the TAAS. Almost all grades started with passing percentages that were in the high forties and mid-fifties in 1994, and most achieved passing rates in the mid- to high-seventies by 1999, an average gain of 25 points across all grades. This notable increase in the percent of pupils passing within a grade level over time is part of what national researchers have noted about Texas student achievement gains.

The data reflect the fact that all groups, across all grade levels have shown an increasing percentage of pupils passing all sections of the test. Changes in the percentages of students passing all segments has increased most at the eighth-grade level, followed by similar increases at the sixth-, fifth-, and fourth-grade levels. The average improvements (labeled as "gain" on the table) for all students have ranged from a 22-point increase at grade three to a gain of 29 points at grade eight. These improvements are part of what is drawing so much attention to the Texas education scene.

Percent of All Texas Students Passing All Sections of the TAAS, 1994 to 1999

Grade	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Ten
1994	56	52	56	53	53	47	50
1995	65	61	63	58	56	48	52
1996	67	63	69	65	63	55	57
1997	70	67	74	72	70	62	64
1998	73	74	79	75	74	68	69
1999	78	78	82	79	77	76	75
Gain	**22**	**26**	**26**	**26**	**24**	**29**	**25**

Source: Texas Education Agency

While things have gotten better in the last few years, the same data document the fact that far too many of our pupils are not performing at grade level on these measures. For example, the third grade data for 1999 indicate that although 78 percent passed, 22 percent did not. In a similar vein, though 79 percent of sixth graders passed the TAAS in 1999, 21 percent failed, and though 75 percent of 10th graders passed, 25 percent failed the 10th grade exam. We can celebrate a 75 percent passing rate, but should remain very concerned that one in four students fails the exit-level test. Particular concern should be focused at the exit-level test since, at this grade level, failure on the test results in the denial of a high school diploma.

While the progress reflected in the increasing passing rates across all grade levels between 1994 and 1999 should be applauded, it is important to continue our efforts to ensure that all pupils have educational opportunities that enable all of them to pass the state's criterion-referenced measure. Neither Texas educators nor the public should be satisfied until all pupils tested pass the state's mandated exam for their grade level.

Concern with the numbers of pupils failing to achieve passing scores on the TAAS is heightened when we examine the disparate TAAS passing rates reflected among the state's largest ethnic groups.

Ethnic Group TAAS Passing Rates

The box on Page 7 summarizes the TAAS passing rates for major subgroups of Texas pupils including White, African American and Hispanic pupils and economically disadvantaged students. Laid out in a similar format as the first table, the data here show the percentage of pupils from within each subgroup who passed the TAAS in grades three through eight and grade 10. As was the case with the aggregated data discussed in the previous section, all subgroups, across all grade levels tested reflect improved performance on the TAAS.

The data also show that minority pupils – both Hispanic and African American – show a greater gain in the percentages of pupils passing the TAAS in each of the grades tested than their White pupil coun-

TAAS Gains – continued on page 7

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Each month we will ask a new question for readers online. A sample of responses will be printed in a later issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*. This month's question is…

How does your school or campus support and value language and cultural diversity?

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TAAS Gains – continued from page 6

terparts at each grade level. While White pupils in third grade reflect a TAAS passing rate that rose from 68 percent passing to 87 percent passing – a net gain of 19 points – the Hispanic pupil passing rate for the third grade level increased from 44 percent passing to 73 percent passing – a 29-point gain. Similarly, while only 36 percent of African American third graders passed the TAAS in 1994, the percent passing had increased to 59 percent by 1999 – a 23-point gain.

The TAAS performance data clearly indicate that despite the increasing percentages of pupils passing the TAAS, there remains a substantial disparity in the total percentages of students passing all TAAS sections taken across the state's largest ethnic groups.

The data show that while White student gains were in the range of 19 to 24 percentage points, African American student gains ranged from 38 points at grade eight to 23 points at grade three, while Hispanic student gains ranged from 39 points in grade six to 21 points in grade three.

It is this more rapid increase in minority passing rates that has led to the statements that Texas appears to be "closing the achievement gap" between White and minority pupils attending Texas schools.

A closer look at the data shows that while there has been evident improvement and a degree of closing the performance gap between White, middle-class pupils and low-income, minority pupils, we are not at a stage where the relative performances for all the state subgroups are anywhere close to being equal. While there is reason to be hopeful, the ultimate goal of having all students achieve at high levels – regardless of race, income or ethnic background – is far from a reality in Texas. A close examination of the TAAS statewide summary data supports this conclusion.

The recently released 1999 TAAS summary data reflecting the latest round of state assessments show that, in 1999, while 87 percent of White pupils are passing the third grade TAAS, only 59 percent of African American pupils and 73 percent of Hispanic pupils are performing as well. The differential at the fourth grade level is similar: 85 percent of White pupils achieved passing scores, but only 62 percent of African American pupils and 73 percent of Hispanic pupils passed all sections. The same 20-point gap can be seen between White students and African American pupils throughout the grade levels tested in 1999. While the gap is somewhat smaller for Hispanic students, the differentials hover between the 12- and 22-point level at the various grades tested.

The gap is smaller than it was in 1994, but there remains very significant differences across the groups. No educator should be comfortable until the differences between the state's major student subgroups are eliminated.

Tracking TAAS Performance of Groups of Pupils Over Time

Another reason for reservation is IDRA's analysis of data on specific groups (or grade cohorts) as they progressed through the Texas school system from 1994 to 1999. The box on Page 9 tracks the percentages of pupils passing the TAAS for groups of students that were in third grade in 1994 and calculates the gains in the percentages of those pupils passing all TAAS sub-tests in subsequent school years. Acknowledging that the actual composition of the individual students who make up this cohort may change slightly over time, it is safe to assume that the overall group scores (given the sample size) probably reflect the overall progress of the original population. With those assumptions stated, we can proceed

TAAS Gains – continued on page 8

Percent of Texas Students Passing All Sections of the TAAS, 1995 to 1999

		Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	Tenth Grade
White Students	1994	68	63	68	67	67	61	64
	1995	75	72	75	72	72	63	67
	1996	77	73	79	78	77	70	71
	1997	80	77	84	83	82	75	78
	1998	82	81	86	86	85	79	81
	1999	87	85	90	89	87	85	86
	Gain	**19**	**22**	**22**	**22**	**20**	**24**	**22**
Hispanic Students	1994	44	42	44	40	38	32	34
	1995	54	51	53	43	40	31	36
	1996	57	54	60	51	50	40	43
	1997	61	59	66	61	59	49	49
	1998	65	67	72	64	63	56	57
	1999	73	73	75	71	67	67	64
	Gain	**29**	**31**	**31**	**31**	**29**	**35**	**30**
African American Students	1994	36	32	35	32	31	25	28
	1995	46	40	42	36	33	26	31
	1996	49	46	49	47	43	35	37
	1997	55	50	58	56	54	45	46
	1998	57	59	66	62	57	53	52
	1999	59	62	68	67	63	63	60
	Gain	**23**	**30**	**33**	**35**	**32**	**38**	**32**
Economically Disadvantaged Students	1994	42	39	41	37	35	29	32
	1995	52	47	50	41	38	29	34
	1996	54	50	56	50	47	38	40
	1997	59	55	63	59	57	47	47
	1998	62	63	70	63	60	54	54
	1999	69	69	73	69	65	65	62
	Gain	**27**	**30**	**32**	**32**	**30**	**36**	**30**

Source: Texas Education Agency

TAAS Gains – continued from page 7

to consider the relative changes reflected for the state's major subgroups over time.

For minority and low-income student advocates, these analyses over a five-year span give even less cause to celebrate. According to this trend data, the percentage of White pupils passing all segments of the test increased from 68 percent in 1994 to 85 percent in 1999, a net increase of 17 percentage points. For the group of Hispanic pupils who were third graders in 1994, the percentage passing increased from 44 percent to 67 percent – a net gain of 24 percentage points. For this group of Hispanic pupils, there was only a 7-point reduction in the performance gap between White and Hispanic pupils over the five-year span summarized – a net gain of only 1.4 percentage points per year.

A similar analysis for students who were third graders in 1994 indicates that 77 percent of White pupils passed the TAAS while 87 percent passed the TAAS when this group was in the eighth grade four years later – resulting in a 10-point net gain. Hispanic pupils who were third graders in 1996 had passing rates of 54 percent and increased their passing rates to 67 percent when they reached the eighth grade – a net gain of 13 points (see table on Page 7).

Comparing the White net gain of 10 points to the Hispanic students' net gain of 13 points for these groups, it is evident that the gap reduction over time is also very small – a total of three points, or an average of approximately one half point per year.

A similar pattern emerges for the African American cohort of pupils. While third grade African American pupils passing all segments of the TAAS was at 36 percent in 1994, the percentage of those students passing all TAAS sub-tests increased to 63 percent by 1999 – a net increase of 27 percentage points over five years. This increase compared to a 17-point increase for White students over the same period. This greater proportional increase of TAAS passers means that the gap in TAAS performance between African American and White TAAS test takers did decrease for this group over time. What should be sobering for those committed to a complete closing of the performance gap, however is the fact that the gap was only decreased by a total of 10 points over that five-year period (percentages of the cohort passing went from 68 percent to 85 percent for White pupils – a 17 point difference as compared to a 36 percent to 63 percent passing rate for African Ameri-

TAAS Gains – continued on page 9

Educational Reforms in Texas

1975

Texas requires **bilingual education** for English language learners in kindergarten through third grade.

Texas creates **equalization aid program** for low wealth schools and creates **compensatory education** program.

1977

Texas increases equalization aid funding and increases teacher salaries.

1979

Texas creates **Texas Assessment of Basic Skills** – a basic competencies testing program for grades three, five and nine.

1981

Court ruling requires Texas to implement bilingual education and English as a second language programs for all limited-English-proficient (LEP) students.

Texas revises school finance provisions.

1983

Texas develops the Essential Elements – **state curriculum standards.**

1984

Texas enacts major education reforms, including:
increased equalization funding
increased teacher salaries
district performance reports
career ladder for teachers
planning period for teachers
no pass – no play
exit testing for diploma
four year pre-school program
dropout reduction programs
teacher testing (TECAT)

Texas increases state funding of education by more than $900 million. This results in upgrades in the state's basic educational program and enabled local schools to improve their staff, materials and other areas that impacted the quality of instruction.

1984 (continued)

Texas provides **supplemental funding** (weights) to schools based on the number and types of pupils they served. These include students who are gifted and talented, those served in special education classes, low-income pupils, and LEP students.

Texas **limits class size** in kindergarten through fourth grade and provides funds to schools to meet limits.

1988

District courts mandate the state legislature to equalize funding (Edgewood I).

1993

Texas revises its school funding system.

Texas' state school performance standards are used as the basis of the state's **accountability system**. Districts must report: performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), attendance, dropouts and other criteria.

1995

Texas moves **closer to equalized school funding** to better ensure school funds are equitable distributed (SB 4).

1995

Some **funding for facilities** is provided to school districts on a competitive basis.

1995

Texas creates **State Board for Educator Certification** to strengthen credentialing of school personnel.

1997

Texas develops the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) – **uniform state curriculum standards** that reflect high expectations for all students.

Texas emphasizes **pre-kindergarten reading**.

Texas requires students who do not pass the TAAS to be automatically retained in grade.

TAAS Gains – continued from page 8

can pupils – a 27 point difference) an average "gap reduction" rate of two points per year.

Assuming that all subgroups continue to improve at rates similar to those experienced to date with White pupils gaining an average of 3.4 points, Hispanic pupils gaining an average of 4.6 points, and African American pupils gaining an average of 5.4 points per year, it will take many years before all groups achieved parity. In fact, if White pupils continued to improve their passing percentages at similar rates, 100 percent of those pupils would pass all segments of TAAS within five years (85 percent passing rates in 1999, plus a 3.4 point gain times five years = 102). Assuming a similar annual level of improvement for Hispanic students, it would take seven years (67 + 4.6 point gain times 7 years = 99.2) for 100 percent of that same Hispanic cohort to pass all sections of the TAAS.

The problem is that this Hispanic cohort does not have eight years left in the Texas school system. If they are now eighth graders, they have only four more years to achieve parity. The percentages passing must be accelerated by three times the current rates to produce results comparable to their White student counterparts by graduation, a scenario considered highly unlikely.

For African American pupils a similar pattern is noted. It would take that group of African American pupils seven more years to achieve a 100 percent passing rate. As is the case with Hispanic students, these African American pupils do not have that much time left before graduation. Their improvement rate would have to double within the four years left for them to pass at rates comparable to their White classmates. A similar pattern can be noted for economically disadvantaged pupils.

These observations along with our familiarity with the state's tendency to try to re-define away, rather than resolve achievement gap disparities (as is the case with dropout calculating and reporting) are the basis for IDRA's reserved response to the so-called "Texas miracle" discussions that have been initiated in national circles. IDRA has concluded that there is far to go and much more to do than what has been done to achieve true parity in achievement for all pupils. Looking at TAAS scores within single years is one good way of assessing whether we are making progress within grade levels, and it informs us about the extent to which we are narrowing achievement differentials within specific grades in this state. We, like others, celebrate the progress that has been made toward educational reform. Unfortunately, as is too often the case, IDRA is one of the few to point out that while things have improved, we still have far, far to go.

This reserve is further reinforced when we analyze within-grade-historical-data for grade 10 – the grade level where failure to pass the TAAS results in students being denied a Texas high school diploma. According to state summary reports, the percentage of White 10th graders passing all segments of TAAS increased from 64 percent in 1994 to 86 percent in 1999 – a net increase of 22 points. Hispanic pupils went from 34 percent passing all segments in 1994 to 64 percent passing all segments in 1999 – a net gain of 30 points within the 10th grade. Similarly for African American pupils, the percent passing increased from 28 percent passing to 60 percent – a net improvement of 32 points.

Despite the notable improvement observed, the gap among the percentages of 10th grade pupils passing all sections of the TAAS remained huge in 1999. White students passed at rate of 86 percent, while Hispanic students passed at a 64 percent pace, and African American pupils passed at

TAAS Gains – continued on page 12

Internet Web Sites on Accountability

American Association of University Women www.aauw.org
American Educational Research Association www.aera.net
At-Risk Students – U.S. Department of Education Reports and Studies
www.ed.gov/pubs/studies.html#At-Risk
Bureau of Indian Affairs www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html
Center for Research, Evaluation, Assessment, Student Testing (CREST)
gopher://spinoza.cse.ucla.edu:70/11/.CSE
Comprehensive Centers Network www.ccnetwork.org
Council of Chief State School Officers www.ccsso.org
Education Commission of the States www.ecs.org
Equity Assistance Centers www.equitycenters.org
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) www.nces.ed.gov
Secretary of Education's Initiatives www.ed.gov/pubs/EDInitiatives/
South Central Collaborative for Equity (at IDRA) www.idra.org/scce
U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov
Women's Educational Equity Act Resource Center
www.edc.org/womensEquity

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

TAAS Performance of Groups of Students Over Time, 1994 to 1999

	Third Graders 1994	Fourth Graders 1995	Fifth Graders 1996	Sixth Graders 1997	Seventh Graders 1998	Eighth Graders 1999
White Students	68	72	79	83	85	85
Hispanic Students	44	51	60	61	63	67
African American Students	36	40	49	56	57	63
Economically Disadvantaged Students	42	47	56	59	60	65

Source: Texas Education Agency

Seventh Annual

IDRA *La Semana del Niño*

Early Childhood Educators Institute™

"Educating a New Generation"

Mark your calendar: April 25-27, 2000 · San Antonio Airport Hilton

Join us for the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute as we celebrate and get ready to teach a new generation of children.

Plenary and Concurrent Sessions

The institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development concurrent sessions that are customized to the varied needs of early childhood educators and administrators. Information on any additional sessions will be available at the institute. The topics for this year's institute include innovative instructional strategies, information about policy issues, and the latest research.

School Visits

Take this opportunity to visit model early childhood centers. School visits provide you with the opportunity to share ideas while seeing them in action. Institute participants will travel to high-performing, high-minority schools in the San Antonio area that are effectively working with diverse learners. Two school visits (one each on Wednesday and Thursday) are available to the first 150 institute registrants on a first come, first served basis. Transportation will be provided.

Institute Sponsors

IDRA is pleased to bring you this Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Supporting IDRA projects include:

- IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas);
- *STAR Center* (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation);
- RE-CONNECT (the parent information and resource center that serves Texas); and
- Mobilization for Equity (a project funded by the Ford Foundation through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students to engage the public and parents in achieving the best possible education for all students).

Each of these IDRA projects provides specialized training and technical assistance to public schools. Information on how your campus can use these resources to improve instruction and assessment will be available at the institute and may also be obtained by calling IDRA at 210/444-1710 or by visiting IDRA's web site (www.idra.org).

Conference Topics...

Policy
- Early childhood education in the new century: Opportunities for all students
- The role of early childhood education in creating a nation of learners – reflecting on the national education goals

Literacy
- Including fantasy and imagination in the early childhood curriculum
- The language, the teacher and the child: Integrating a harmonious whole
- Creating literacy opportunities at home
- Effective instructional strategies for reluctant young readers

Social Development
- Children's literature: A tool to develop social skills in the early childhood classroom

Child Development
- Developing language, thoughts and values in the early childhood classroom

Multicultural Education
- The use of authentic literature in the classroom: Sharing our values

Curriculum
- Integrating fine arts in the early childhood program: A project approach

Play
- The child's right to play

Research
- Minority students: The latest research regarding their education and their opportunities
- Diversity in the classroom: Implications for the child

Classroom Management
- Managing learning centers

Hotel Information

The institute will be held at the San Antonio Airport Hilton. The hotel is offering a special rate of $95 per night for a single or double room (plus state and local taxes), based on availability. The hotel reservation deadline for the reduced rate is April 10, 2000. Call 1-800-HILTONS to make reservations. Be sure to reference the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute in order to qualify for the special rate.

Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute™ Registration Form

YES I will attend the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute on April 25-27, 2000. (Please use one form per person. Feel free to make copies of this form.)

Name _____

School or Organization _____

Title/Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

E-mail _____

$ _____ Total enclosed PO # _____

Register **online** with a purchase order number at *www.idra.org*

Mail with a check or purchase order to IDRA at
5835 Callaghan Road, #350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
Attention: Carol Chávez

Fax with a purchase order to IDRA at 210-444-1714
Attention: Carol Chávez

Fees

___ $175 Institute registration (includes institute sessions, Thursday luncheon and [for first 150 registrants] two school visits) - *$195 if after March 1, 2000*

Make payable to: Intercultural Development Research Association. A purchase order number may be used to reserve space. Full payment prior to the institute is **expected**.

Educating the Next Generation

Experience the magic of San Antonio at Fiesta. Join the celebration and spend a few days here for professional development and leadership sessions. IDRA is delighted to host the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Explore new skills and insights through exciting sessions featuring early childhood experts and school site visits showcasing innovative programs for the youngest of diverse learners. This year we are jumping into a new era of quality education for language-minority students and their families. This professional development event is open to early childhood educators, administrators and parents.

Special Events

Bookfair

IDRA has collaborated with the San Antonio Public Library to bring together an all-day bookfair that will feature the latest in bilingual and Latino children's literature. The bookfair will also showcase readings by authors of children's literature including Diane Gonzales Bertrand with her popular book, *Sip, Slurp, Soup, Soup, Caldo, Caldo, Caldo.*

Parent Institute:
Parent Leaders for the Next Generation

This one-day event on Thursday will concentrate on the challenges in early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. Parents and educators will dialogue on ways to focus their leadership to enhance early childhood learning.

Video Conference on Family Issues

Wednesday, April 26, 2000
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CST

In addition to the institute in San Antonio, parents, community liaisons and community resource personnel across the state will come together to celebrate the International Week of the Young Child through special sessions on early childhood education methods and practices via a statewide video conference. IDRA lead trainer, Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., will lead the long distance conversation focusing on parent leadership and outreach – parent leadership based on listening, outreach and coaching of potential leaders. The video conference will be held on April 26, 2000, at participating Texas regional education service centers. If you are interested in attending at your local video conference site and cannot attend the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute, contact Yojani Hernandez at IDRA (210/ 444-1710) for details.

Special Session

Regina M. Benjamin, M.D.

Dr. Benjamin is a medical practitioner in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. In 1995, she became the first young physician (under age 40) elected to the American Medical Association (AMA) board of trustees, as well as its first African American woman. She currently serves as president of the AMA Education and Research Foundation. Dr. Benjamin has been in private practice, worked in emergency rooms and nursing homes, operated a rural health clinic, and spent time as a medical missionary in Honduras. She was recognized in *Time* magazine as one of the "Nation's 50 Future Leaders Age 40 and Under," and as a "Person of the Week" on ABC's *World News Tonight* with Peter Jennings. Dr. Benjamin will be discussing the effects of using ritalin with young, hyper-active students and promising alternatives for such cases.

Featuring

Diane Gonzales Bertrand

Ms. Diane Gonzales Bertrand was selected as a National Hispanic Scholar in 1991 and has been recognized as an outstanding educator and advocate for literacy by the San Antonio Youth Literacy Council and the Upward Bound Program. Ms. Gonzales Bertrand is currently the Writer-in-Residence at St. Mary's University in San Antonio where she teaches creative writing and English composition. She is a nationally recognized writer of novels, picture books and poetry.

Bertha Perez, Ed.D.

Dr. Bertha Perez is a tenured professor of education and bicultural bilingual studies and is associate dean for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the downtown campus of the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a nationally and internationally recognized consultant and has worked with issues of cultural and linguistic diversity with groups throughout the United States, Latin America, Spain and China.

Gloria Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Dr. Gloria Rodriguez is founder, national president and CEO of AVANCE, Inc., and author of *Raising Nuestros Niños: Bringing Up Latino Children in a Bicultural World.* Dr. Rodriguez has been recognized both locally and nationally and has been invited to speak and present testimony throughout the country. She was a delegate to the White House Conference on Families and, by presidential appointment, served as part of the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations International Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Bradley Scott

Mr. Bradley Scott is an IDRA senior education associate and director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE). Serving school districts in Federal Region VI – Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas – the SCCE helps to create schools that work for all children by protecting their civil rights and guaranteeing their equal educational opportunities. On Tuesday morning, he will welcome the participants to begin a week of learning, exploring, and professional growth for us all.

At a Glance

Tuesday, April 25, 2000

Morning session led by Mr. Bradley Scott, IDRA senior education associate and director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE). A series of concurrent sessions will be held in the morning and again in the afternoon. Participants present papers. Dr. Gloria Rodriguez will be the keynote speaker at the closing session.

Wednesday, April 26, 2000

School visits in the morning or attend an opening session featuring Ms. Carol Whelin who will be modeling art activities in the classroom. An all-day bookfair will also be featured. Ms. Diane Gonzales Bertrand will be the keynote speaker at the closing session. At another location, hundreds of early childhood educators from across the state will be linked to share a long-distance conversation via video conference focused on parent leadership and outreach. The evening will host a reading forum on Project FLAIR.

Thursday, April 27, 2000

School visits in the morning with a choice of attending the technology fair or parent leadership workshop for those who do not visit schools. A morning session will feature Dr. Regina Benjamin and her discussion on the effects of and alternatives to using ritalin on young, hyper-active students. The institute will close with a luncheon featuring keynote speaker Dr. Bertha Perez, associate dean for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the downtown campus of the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Institute

Tuesday, April 25, 2000
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Registration opens at 8:00 a.m.
Luncheon at noon.

Wednesday, April 26, 2000
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Lunch is on your own.

Thursday, April 27, 2000
8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Luncheon at noon

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a rate of only 60 percent. This inter-ethnic group passing rate disparity in the 10th grade in 1994 was 30 points between White students and Hispanic students and 36 points between White students and African American pupils. By 1999, the 10th grade inter-group gap was reduced to 22 points between White students and Hispanic pupils and 26 points between White students and African American pupils. Given that passing all sections of the TAAS is a prerequisite to receiving a diploma in Texas, this difference easily converts to an estimate of the significant difference in the graduation rates observed for Texas' major ethnic groups, a disparity long noted by IDRA.

One area of additional concern is the fact that the passing rate disparities that are narrowing at the elementary grades, do not show the same rate of reduction at the high school level. This is despite the fact that many low-performing pupils from all three groups (but particularly from the state's Hispanic population) have already dropped out by the 10th grade, leaving the group of "survivors" to take the 10th grade exit TAAS.

No educator should be comfortable until the differences between the state's major student subgroups are eliminated.

The fact that the performance gap has remained relatively constant at the high school level suggests that secondary schools have much more to do before we can assume that the differential TAAS passing rates for the state's major ethnic groups is being effectively addressed. Since there is no inherent inequality in academic potential among different subgroups of Texas school children, we must continue to seek opportunities and programs that lead to high achievement for all pupils. There is no reason minority and low-income students should have lower levels of academic achievement.

Clearly, some Texas pupils at each of the grade levels tested are passing. This is reason for applause. But, passing the TAAS is merely a minimum level of achievement. It is not the same as *mastering* school subjects. We at IDRA look forward to the days when *all* children regardless of race, language background or economic circumstance are achieving at high levels. Until we get there, it is too early to host victory parades and relax.

Albert Cortez, Ph.D., is division director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus:
Early Childhood

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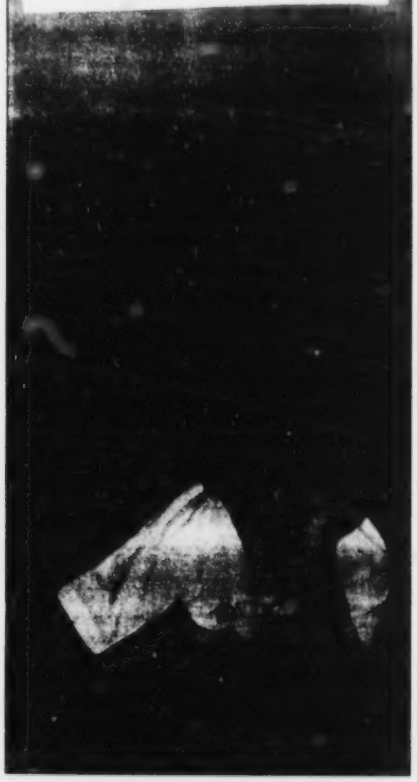
Making a Difference for Children – Comprehensive Centers Network

Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

Inside this Issue:

- New initiative for higher education
- Parent leaders in schools
- Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- Evaluating Title VII programs



In 1994 the *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) established the comprehensive regional assistance centers – a national network of 15 centers mandated to help this country's most disadvantaged schools restructure and improve education for all students, especially those students who are poor and considered at risk of failure. Originally conceived as "one stop shopping" under the IASA, the comprehensive centers provide their expertise to schools with: limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, migrant students, immigrant students, neglected or delinquent students, homeless students, Native American students, students with disabilities, and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students. These are the students who, traditionally, are left behind or overlooked.

This new concept of technical assistance greatly expanded the centers' range and scope of responsibilities compared to previous categorical technical assistance programs. Before IASA, there were 48 separate, federally-funded centers providing technical assistance to states, districts, schools, tribes and grantees responsible for implementing the categorical programs that comprised the $12 billion IASA. These 48 assistance centers were funded at more than $45 million, but they operated independently.

Under Title XIII of IASA, Congress consolidated the independent assistance centers into the 15 comprehensive centers. The new centers were deemed a more cost-effective and efficient way of coordinating technical assistance services. It made sense to coordinate funds and programs that were, in many instances, targeting the same student. Congress authorized up to $55 million for the centers but actual appropriations have never exceeded $28 million – a little over half of the authorized amount and significantly less than the level of support available previously.

It is against this backdrop that the comprehensive centers have operated for the past four and one half years. Despite the low level of funding, the centers have capitalized on their collective strengths including their ability to leverage resources through strong collaborations with comprehensive center network partners and other service providers across the country. Through collaboration and comprehensive technical assistance, the centers are able to reach and positively impact many of the schools with the greatest needs – schools with few resources; high-poverty, low performing schools; schools in remote areas of the country; and schools with limited capacity.

Together, the centers provide direct assistance in designing and improving instructional programs in high-poverty schools; training, technical assistance and other staff development activities for teachers and administrators; information on current research and best practices in ways that are useful and meaningful for school staff; and direct assistance in making school-to-school and school-to-community connections.

Making a Difference – continued on page 2

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Making a Difference – continued from page 1

The following services are the core of the comprehensive centers' mission:

- Improving teaching and learning.
- Helping all children meet challenging standards.
- Assisting schools serving students in poverty, and
- Helping states, post-secondary institutions and school districts integrate federal, state and local programs in ways that will improve schools and whole school systems.

Texas schools are served by the STAR Center, a collaboration of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation. Without the comprehensive centers, many schools and their students with limited resources would not have access to services. Those students with the greatest needs would be lost or forgotten in the marketplace.

While relatively new, the comprehensive centers have made an enormous difference for schools and students across the country. Two recently released reports confirm this. The first report is from Policy Studies Associates (PSA). The results of this independent, external evaluation of the quality and impact of the comprehensive centers are based on several nationally representative surveys of states, districts and schools administered by PSA on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. PSA findings are summarized below.

Percentage of Clients Who Turn to Comprehensive Centers on Critical School Reform Topics*

Critical School Reform Topics	Comprehensive Centers
Implementing Other IASA Programs	79%
Meeting the Needs of Special Populations	71%
Expanding Parent/Family Involvement	70%
Improving Curriculum and Instruction	68%
Implementing Schoolwide Programs	67%
Assessment Student	66%
Improving Bilingual/ESL Programs	66%
Implementing Challenging Standards and Accountability	65%
Implementing Model Programs or Comprehensive School Reform	65%
Analyzing Student Achievement	64%
Consolidating/Integrating Federal Programs	63%
Creating Safe and Drug-Free Learning Environments	55%

**Percentage of clients indicating that they turn to comprehensive centers "Always" or "Sometimes."*

Source: Policy Studies Associates

Reaching Targeted Clients

PSA found that the comprehensive centers have provided technical assistance to clients representing the following.

- High poverty schools and districts
  - + The comprehensive centers have provided technical assistance to 34 of the 50 districts in the country with the highest concentrations of children living in poverty.
  - + More than 70 percent of the centers' clients work in schools or districts with poverty levels that are greater

Making a Difference – continued on page 9

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5 **Teaching LEP Students...Arts**

6 **Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities**

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9 **Research on How the Brain Learns**

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, © 2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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Are Computers Appropriate in the Early Childhood Classroom?: A Case for Cyberkinder

Hilaria Bauer, M.A.

Technophobe, cyber novice, electronically challenged... Call it what you will. As a teacher, I was puzzled about computers.

Then one day, our school had a computer lab. It was introduced to us as a new way of teaching students basic literacy skills. Naturally, when something new comes to a school, not everyone is invited to experience the innovation at the same time. So it was a while before my turn came to use the lab. By then, I had heard so many horror stories about the difficulty of using them. I was petrified that I would push the wrong button and make everything go blank on the screen. It did not help that our secretary's desk had a little sign that read: "To err is human, to really mess up things requires a computer." I definitely did not want to mess up things.

Since I am already a pretty good teacher, I said to myself, why should I even bother to try this new thing. All my children need to learn is to read, write and, of course, do math. Unconsciously, the innovator in me was being silenced because of my fear of the unknown.

I rationalized that computers may be okay for older children, but not for my little ones. The older students already knew how to identify letters and numbers. They had the attention span necessary to spend time in front of the screen and figure out what was needed in the exercise. Computers were not appropriate for my little ones. Yes, that was it, not appropriate! My young students needed to spend more time exploring, interacting with each other, playing, developing motor skills, etc., etc., etc.

But, I was forced into the computer lab. I had no choice, and I realized that I might as well learn to deal with it. Still, I put forth a struggle by asking questions (questions that any good teacher should ask about curricula, etc.). Only, I tried to use my questions as excuses for avoiding computers.

My first question was: "Is Spanish software available?" All of my students were classified as beginners in English, and their native language was Spanish. I knew then, and still believe now, that the foundation for early literacy rests on the development of the mother tongue. Even back then, we had a very basic program called VALE. VALE is a phonetics-based software program that allows children to practice letter-sound relationships. Despite its limitations, I knew the program would help students develop letter-sound relationships, which are the building blocks of literacy. Thus, my excuse about linguistically appropriate software would not work.

My second question was: "How can my students interact with each other during this hour-long block of time?" There were eight working computers in our primary computer lab. I decided to sit two students at each computer. I then created a small literacy group with the remaining six. So, I started a computer lab rotation with 16 students working on the computers and six in a small literacy group with me.

The computer lab teacher assistant did not speak Spanish, but she helped me keep everyone on task. She also began to pick up some Spanish from my students. The students also helped each other to recognize letters and sounds. They enjoyed computers so much they looked forward to lab time. They learned to help each other with the basic logistics of running the program. So, my second excuse, about the quality of student interaction during computer lab, would not work.

My third question was: "Can this computer strategy be considered developmentally appropriate practice?" Many critics of computers in early childhood environments frown at the thought of children being stuck for hours in front of computers. People question whether children are being rushed out of childhood prematurely. My students taught me that when given well-organized activities in the computer lab, they look forward to practicing their knowledge. Outside the lab, I continued a generous regimen of literature-based instruction, where books, developmental writing and integrated curriculum instruction were constantly experienced. In the lab, as expected, some students quickly gained proficiency in the practice drills, while others took more time. Little by little, some children began to use the computer as a word processor to write

Cyberkinder ; continued on page 4

Did You Know?

A child's brain at birth has all the brain cells, or neurons, that it will ever have.

About half of all children in the United States are in full-time day care within the first year.

Thirty-eight states do not require family child care providers to have *any* training prior to serving children.

Only 28 percent of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in 1996 in early child care programs compared with 45 percent of their White counterparts.

Cyberkinder - continued from page 3

their compositions.

A National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement says that development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning (Bredekamp and Copple, 1996). I realized that computers were appropriate for my students as long as I kept a respectful distance and allowed them to tell me when they were ready to move to more challenging activities. I began to use the software programs for our benefit, not to let the programs rule our curriculum. Software programs are designed to be used and tailored to the needs of the classroom, not to dictate what should to happen. My third excuse, then, was dissolved by my students' progress and enthusiasm.

For me, the answers to my questions did not come quickly. It took many hours of self-convincing and tailoring the innovation to the class' needs to feel comfortable with the computer's role in my instruction. I experienced frustration because I had not had adequate training, yet I felt challenged to make the best out of a difficult situation.

For me, the answers to my questions did not come quickly. It took many hours of self-convincing and tailoring the innovation to the class' needs to feel comfortable with the computer's role in my instruction.

By the end of the year, I felt strongly that computers would be more productive in the classroom than in a lab so that students would have better access to them. I also learned that, like any other resource, technology products vary widely in quality and application. I learned that the teacher is still the best individual to choose what is appropriate for students.

For my students, many of whom may not have had access to computers otherwise, working with computers was an issue of having an opportunity to equitable access and equitable resources. Bradley Scott, the director of the Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) equity assistance center, refers to these opportunities as "the unobstructed entrance into, involvement of and full participation of learners in schools, programs and activities within schools" (2000). In addition, he says that access to equitable resources means that:

> Funding, staffing and other resources for equity-based excellence that are manifested in the existence of equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible (Scott, 2000).

In early childhood education environments, these goals translate into demanding more access to staff development and resources that are appropriate for our students.

Many times, those of us in early childhood education forget that our students are part of a bigger picture, that eventually children need to become proficient to face to challenges of our times. We need to keep in mind that whether we are ready or not, our students need to experience technology in order to build the social background that will enable them to be successful not only in school, but in life.

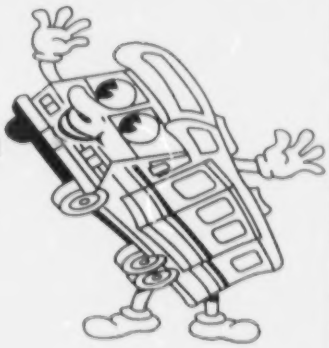
Technology is here to stay, and it is transforming our classrooms. A recurrent theme in the developmentally appropriate practice principles is the theme of development and learning influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts. As the technology revolution unfolds, the way we communicate with each other is evolving. In the past, it was necessary to learn how to write, so letters and notes could convey our thoughts to others. Today, e-mail has changed many of those conventions (Windschitl, 1998).

As our students learn to communicate both orally and in writing, we need to introduce the many ways we are now communicating technologically. In the past, the telephone was a staple of the "house" center. Today, I think we must add a computer.

Cyberkinder - continued on page 12

Introducing the *IDRA Newsletter* Field Trip!

Go on a "Field Trip" on IDRA's Web Site



Get more information on early childhood education!

- Related *IDRA Newsletter* articles and projects
- Statistics, definitions, etc.
- Internet resources
- Internet links

Register for a special prize!

Answer the question of the month!
Each month we will ask a new question for readers online. A sample of responses will be posted online.

This month's question is...
How do you know you've made a difference in a child's life?

www.idra.org

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Teaching Limited-English-Proficient Students through the Arts

José L. Rodríguez

As I was preparing for a recent training session for teachers of English as a second language (ESL), I reviewed key instructional strategies for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. Reading over the material, I caught myself daydreaming about my own experiences as an LEP student. When I began school, there was no such thing as bilingual education. I did not speak English, and my teacher did not speak Spanish. I immediately found refuge by entering an uncollaborative stage. Speaking Spanish was not allowed in school, so the only thing I could do was develop my listening skills and begin repeating words I was hearing.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the Fine Arts lists four basic strands that students are expected to acquire: perception, creative expression and performance, historical and cultural heritage, and critical evaluation. The arts play an important role in the education of children, since before entering school children are constantly engaged in creative play which in turn enhances brain development (Sylwester, 1999). It is through this creative play that many children also develop a love of learning (Hernández, 1998).

I have found that the goals for fine arts can also strengthen the overall instructional program, particularly with LEP children. As teachers know, effective instruction balances both the affective domain (heart) and the cognitive domain (mind). Working with LEP children also requires attention to the linguistic domain. The arts can be used to support instruction in each domain.

The Affective Domain

As educators, we must help children feel good about themselves and their heritage. Early instruction should be provided in the students' home language to sustain confidence, self-assurance, and a positive identity with their cultural heritage. Let me provide some examples of how the arts can support the affective domain.

When children of Mexican American descent enter school and see the artwork of a Mexican American artist displayed in the classroom, they can immediately see themselves portrayed in the artwork. This tells all students that it is acceptable to be who they are and it is acceptable to speak their home language.

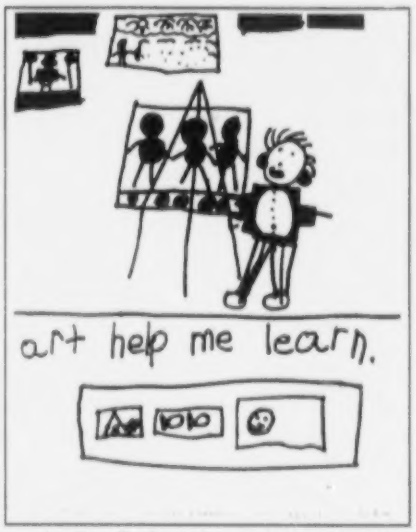
Children are often asked to draw a picture of their neighborhood or a picture of themselves engaged in a family activity. Yet some may be embarrassed or uncomfortable about others' perceptions of their neighborhood or the activities their families engage in. But, once children see, for example, a book by Carmen Lomas Garza, they see themselves in one of her works. This validates their cultural heritage, and soon they are willing to depict their family or their neighborhoods with pride.

Singing songs that are familiar to LEP children also validates their cultural heritage. Children come to school with plenty of background knowledge, which must be enhanced – rather than suppressed – by the teacher.

The Cognitive Domain

In the cognitive domain, instruction is provided to ensure mastery in science, health, math and social studies. Reading and writing stories from a child's cultural background nurtures the cognitive domain along with the affective and linguistic domains. Using the arts in the content areas enhances learning as well. Creative dramatics may be used to teach math concepts; it may be a strategy students want to use while solving a problem. Dramatization of a historical event can enhance a lesson in history. There are many songs that tell stories about events that might otherwise be difficult for students to learn if they just read a textbook. Students also may choose to illustrate a concept they have learned.

As a first grade teacher I was able to teach many concepts through the use of the arts. The students enjoyed coming to class because it was fun. Learning was not just filling out worksheets; it was creating and discovering. The children's creativity was not stifled, but rather nurtured.



by Rogelio Rosas Jr., used with permission

The Linguistic Domain

In the linguistic domain, students practice their comprehension, speaking, composition and reading skills. When children are encouraged to express themselves in their home language, they are not afraid to speak. Once children are allowed to express themselves orally, they can then begin to read and write, which will enhance their comprehension skills.

Nurturing this domain through the arts makes learning meaningful for LEP students. Researcher de Bóo explains:

> For young children, expressing themselves and communicating meaning is an imperfect skill as yet. The child's knowledge of vocabulary and syntax is still developing, and representing objects and events in the symbolic form of words is difficult, demanding and stimulating. Games can give an opportunity to repeat and extend language functions, and can thus be a useful aid to learning. During language games, children will use words to recall, express, explain, question and

Teaching LEP Students – continued on page 6

Teaching LEP Students – continued from page 5

sequence their thoughts. Children get a chance to develop skills of pronunciation and to use language purposefully in an atmosphere of fun (de Bóo, 1992).

It is through these finger plays, simple songs and creative dramatics that teachers are able to prepare their students to become better readers. Music and creative dramatics allow children to move about creatively and freely. This movement later helps them learn to form letters. After they have experienced the movement of the letters, they can then transfer that movement onto a piece of paper using a paintbrush or a crayon.

Early childhood education expert and innovator Lella Gandini states, "All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their learning, in engaging in social interaction and in negotiating with everything the environment brings to them" (Gandini, 1999). When the three areas of instructional strategies for LEP students are met through a creative curriculum, the students leave an uncollaborative stage and enter an interactive stage of learning.

TEA Releases Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines

In December 1999, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released the Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines. These guidelines articulate what 3- and 4-year-old students should know and be able to do in the foundation and enrichment areas. They provide a means to align prekindergarten programs with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Use of the guidelines by school districts is voluntary. The guidelines address the following areas: language and early literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, health and safety, personal and social development, physical development, and technology applications. Copies of the guidelines document may be purchased from Publications Distribution, Texas Education Agency, PO Box 13817, Austin, Texas 78711-3817; or downloaded from the TEA web site: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/early/prekguide.html.

Resources

de Bóo, M. *Action, Rhymes and Games* (Warwickshire, Great Britain: Scholastic Publications Ltd., 1992) pg. 43.

Gandini, L. "Fundamentals of the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education," *Young Children* (November 1993).

Hernández, Y.F. "Child's Play," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 1998).

Sylwester, R. "Art for the Brain's Sake," *Educational Leadership* (November 1998).

José L. Rodriguez is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In February, IDRA worked with **10,738** teachers, administrators and parents through **96** training and technical assistance activities and **206** program sites in **12** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- Sexual Harassment Prevention
- *Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program* – Youth Leadership Day
- Integrating Technology into the Classroom
- Dual Language Program Planning
- Parent Institute – National Association for Bilingual Education annual conference

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Richardson Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Chicago Public Schools, Illinois
- Houston ISD, Texas
- Southwest Texas State University
- Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico
- San Antonio ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

Eighteen colleges and universities are improving higher education opportunities for Hispanic youth through planning grants provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The grants represent phase one of the Foundation's six-year, $28.7 million ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education) initiative. Through ENLACE, colleges and universities are forming partnerships with communities, K-12 public and private school districts, and businesses. By working together the partners will give Hispanic students the support they need to succeed from kindergarten through high school and beyond. During phase two implementation of ENLACE, set to begin in 2001, the Foundation will support eight to 10 coalitions with grants of up to $2 million each. IDRA is serving as the managing partner for the initiative. The three key components of ENLACE are: a common vision of a brighter future for Latino youth; collaborative work in coalitions; and a focus on strengthening public school-university-community partnerships.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/444-1710.

Project Alianza Research Publications Available

Méxican Normalista Teachers as a Resource for Bilingual Education in the United States: Connecting Two Models of Teachers Preparation

by John E. Petrovic, Graciela Orozco, Esther González, Roger Díaz de Cossío

This publication provides an international comparative perspective on teacher preparation in Mexico and the United States, with a special focus on the preparation of bilingual education teachers. Its primary audience consists of teacher educators, program administrators, international transcript evaluators, and registrars in the United States working with students who have prior teacher preparation in the Mexican system. Therefore, the largest section of the monograph is dedicated to providing a thorough description of this system.

Section I begins with a discussion and overview of U.S. teacher certification requirements and processes. Mainly for international readers, this section provides a brief history of teacher education in the United States and discusses such issues as who grants the teaching license, recent developments and future trends in teacher preparation (e.g., high-stakes testing, disallowing "education" as a major, alternative certification), and the emergence of the bilingual education endorsement.

Section II presents the Mexican teacher preparation system. To provide a foundation, it begins with an overview of the history and structure of the Mexican educational system from elementary school through higher education. It then provides a thorough discussion of teacher preparation in Mexico, including a description of the different types of certification programs and the history and growth of teacher preparation. Of greatest interest to those readers working with students who have prior teacher preparation in Mexico are the specific programs of study (curricula) required to become a teacher. There have been a number of programs of study over the years and all of them from 1975 to the present are fully detailed, including the names and descriptions of specific courses and credit hour requirements.

Section III compares the two teacher preparation and certification systems, discussing the systemic and educational differences. The educational requirements for becoming a teacher in Mexico and the United States sometimes overlap and, yet, are sometimes strikingly different. The monograph summarizes major differences in the general education, professional education, specialization, and practical experience requirements. It ends with a discussion of what teachers prepared in Mexico may need to gain certification in the United States.

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Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers

by Michael Guerrero

This monograph addresses a long ignored issue in bilingual education, the academic Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers. The author draws on relevant literature and research and on personal experiences to discuss this dimension of bilingual education.

Section I indicates that stakeholders agree that the teacher's level of proficiency is important and related to student achievement. However, many bilingual education teachers do not have an adequate level of proficiency to fully serve the students.

Section II reviews the language standards for teacher language proficiency mandated by the five states with the highest concentrations of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. An important conclusion is that among these states, there is little consensus regarding what the standards should be.

Section III describes the different language proficiency tests used by these five states to ensure that teachers are adequately proficient to provide instruction in Spanish. There appears to be incongruence between what is mandated by some of these states and what is contained in their tests. Further, very little is known about the psychometric qualities of these tests.

Section IV reviews the context within which prospective bilingual education teachers must function as they develop their Spanish language proficiency, beginning from infancy. Schooling, even within bilingual programs, appears to promote a subtractive sociolinguistic milieu. Stated differently, prospective bilingual education teachers in the United States lack proficiency because the educational infrastructure does very little to promote academic Spanish.

The final section of the monograph sketches out a preliminary plan of action and set of policy recommendations. The monograph is an invitation to begin a painful yet critical discussion on these inter-related issues that clearly impact the quality of bilingual education in the United States.

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Each of these three publications was prepared by the Center for Bilingual Education and Research, College of Education, Arizona State University as a resource for Project Alianza – a consortium of organizations and universities working to improve preparation programs for bilingual education teachers. Project Alianza is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation through a collaboration of Intercultural Development Research Association and the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation.

Project Alianza – *continued on page 8*

Project Alianza – continued from page 7

Certification and Endorsement of Bilingual Education Teachers: A Comparison of State Licensure Requirements

by Eva Midobuche

This document details the requirements for certification and endorsement for prospective bilingual education teachers in seven states with high concentrations of limited-English-proficient (LEP) children. The states examined include Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, New York and Texas. A second purpose of this report is to ascertain the standards currently being implemented across these states with respect to LEP students.

Specifically, the following questions were researched:

- What are the prevailing requirements for becoming a licensed bilingual education teacher in the United States?
- How do these requirements compare and contrast among selected states?
- To what extent are the use of specific competencies and standards for measuring them been adopted in bilingual education?

Data was collected from official state education department documents and education personnel from within each state. Data was also collected from other primary and secondary sources as well as web sites. These data were viewed from the perspective of analyzing the requirements for licensure and endorsement within the field of bilingual education.

Although many states have endorsements and other such requirements in place for all teachers (including bilingual teachers), the use of standards varies from state to state. It is difficult to determine if each state has specific standards for bilingual education teachers. However, all states do have specific requirements that align themselves with standards going back to at least 1974. Also, communication across states, institutions of higher education, researchers and practitioners alike, are difficult at best. The impression that is sometimes given is that bilingual education personnel are often at a loss to explain or even defend the field with regard to the issue of standards. Although much is happening at several levels, the system for communicating this to the field is somewhat lacking. This creates gaps in the bilingual education family of institutions.

Despite being neglected by reform movements, the field of bilingual education has moved in the direction of establishing criteria, standards and academic requirements for licensure and endorsement. Institutions of higher education in particular have improved the quality of bilingual teacher preparation programs. These programs are often in line with state mandates and requirements. However, communicating these positive advances to the field in general has proven difficult. The monograph concludes with a series of recommendations.

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For a copy of any of these publications send check or purchase order to IDRA, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210/444-1710; Fax 210/444-1710; e-mail: contact@idra.org or see www.idra.org.

Internet Web Sites on Early Childhood Education

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) www.ascd.org
Birds of a Feather www.mcn.org/ed/cur/liv/ind/birds
Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement www.ciera.org
Children's Music Web www.childrensmusic.org
ERIC Clearinghouse – Elementary and Early Childhood Education ericeece.org
Early Childhood Education On Line www.ume.maine.edu/~cofed/eceol
Early Childhood Educators & Family Web Corner www.nauticom.net/www/cokids/index.html
Early Childhood Research Institute (CLAS) clas.uiuc.edu
Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) www.e3pg.com/hippy.htm
Idea Box – Early Childhood Ed and Activities www.theideabox.com
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
K-8 Aeronautics Internet Textbook wings.ucdavis.edu
KinderArt www.bconnex.net/~jarea/lessons.htm
Kindergarten Connection www.kconnect.com
National Association for the Education of Young Children www.naeyc.org
National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System www.nectas.unc.edu
National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/index.html
Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc. www.patnc.org
ReadyWeb: Readiness Links ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/readyweb/readyweb.html
Texas Education Agency www.tea.state.tx.us
Thematic Planning Units www.sped.ukans.edu/projects/theme
Zero to Three www.zerotothree.org

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site. www.idra.org

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Research on How the Brain Learns Has Implications on Early Childhood Education

Below are excerpts of articles on brain research findings and implications for education. The articles appeared in the November 1998 issue of Educational Leadership, a journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

"Three principles from brain research – emotional safety, appropriate challenge and self-constructed meaning – suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to classroom teaching is ineffective for most students and harmful to some."

– *Carol Ann Tomlinson and M. Layne Kalbfleisch, "Teach Me, Teach My Brain: A Call for Differentiated Classrooms."*

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"The brain takes in data only through the sensory perceptions that enter through the windows of the body's five senses."

– *Lawrence Lowery, "How New Science Curriculums Reflect Brain Research."*

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"Finding One: The brain changes physiologically as a result of experience. The environment in which a brain operates determines to a large degree the functioning ability of that brain…Enriched environments unmistakably influence the brain's growth and learning.

Finding Two: IQ is not fixed at birth.

Finding Three: Some abilities are acquired more easily during certain sensitive periods, or 'windows of opportunity.'

Finding Four: Learning is strongly influenced by emotion…Emotion plays a dual role in human learning. First it plays a positive role in that the stronger the emotion connected with an experience, the stronger the memory of that experience…In contrast, if the emotion is too strong (for example, the situation is perceived by the learner to be threatening), then learning is decreased."

– *Pat Wolfe and Ron Brandt, "What Do We Know from Brain Research?"*

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"From fine-tuning muscular systems to integrating emotion and logic, the arts have important biological value…Emotion and attention (which are central to all activity in the arts) often lead us to important rational behaviors that wouldn't have emerged if we hadn't walked through that arts-enhanced doorway. Emotion drives attention, and attention drives learning, problem solving, behavior, and just about everything else."

– *Robert Sylwester, "Art for the Brain's Sake."*

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"New brain research shows not only that music is fun, but also that it improves our brain development and even enhances skills in other subjects such as reading and math… Music has the ability to facilitate language acquisition, reading readiness, and general intellectual development; to foster positive attitudes and to lower truancy in middle and high school; to enhance creativity; and to promote social development, personality adjustment and self-worth."

– *Norman M. Weinberger, "The Music in Our Minds."*

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"Research shows that students who talk about how they and others think become better learners. The theory of mind that children acquire in the preschool years provides the conceptual foundation for the metacognitive skills they require in school."

– *Janet Wilde Astington, "Theory of Mind Goes to School."*

Making a Difference – continued from page 2

than 50 percent.

- Title I schoolwide programs
  - + At least 73 percent of school-based clients are from schools with Title I schoolwide programs. Title I schoolwide programs are schools where at least 50 percent of the students are living in poverty.
- Large school districts
  - + The comprehensive centers have provided technical assistance to over 50 percent of the largest school districts (greater than 25,000 students) in the nation.
- Schools and districts with high percentages of LEP students
  - + Of the centers' clients, over 50 percent are from schools or districts where more than 10 percent of the students are LEP.
- State education agencies and other technical assistance providers to schools and districts
  - + Almost 400 clients from every state education agency in the country received on-site professional development or consultation from the comprehensive centers. In addition, more than 400 clients from more than 300 intermediate education agencies and other educational organizations providing technical assistance were served by the comprehensive centers.

Client Satisfaction

PSA found that the comprehensive center clients indicated satisfaction in several ways.

- At least 70 percent of the comprehensive centers' clients were "very satisfied" (the highest rating) with the centers' quality of products and services in the following six areas: implementing schoolwide programs; addressing the needs of special student populations, including LEP, migrant and American Indian; improving curriculum and instruction in reading/language arts; challenging standards and accountability; assessing students; and analyzing student achievement data and interpreting results.
- Of the comprehensive centers' clients surveyed, 86 percent were "very" or "moderately" satisfied with the overall quality of comprehensive centers' products and services.

Making a Difference – continued on page 10

Making a Difference – *continued from page 9*

- Of all clients receiving services, one out of three reported that the technical assistance *served their purposes completely*, and an additional 57 percent reported that it provided a good start.

Impact on Client Work

PSA found that the centers have had an impact on the work of the clients in the following ways.

- Of the centers' clients surveyed, 78 percent reported that they gained new information about a program or instructional practice.
- Of the centers' clients surveyed, 77 percent reported that they incorporated into their jobs something they learned from the comprehensive centers.
- Over 75 percent of school-based clients reported that they incorporated into their jobs something from comprehensive center assistance and shared the centers' ideas and information with colleagues.
- Nearly 50 percent of clients reported providing training or technical assistance to others based on comprehensive center services.
- Of the clients surveyed, 57 percent reported that the comprehensive centers' assistance increased teacher knowledge and skills.
- Almost half reported that the service they received from a comprehensive center helped the organization take the next step in a reform effort.

External Technical Assistance

PSA found that the comprehensive centers were the most frequently turned to source of external technical assistance on critical topics in education reform.

- More than 75 percent of comprehensive center clients reported the following reasons for their decisions to use center services:
  - ✣ center products and services were of high quality,
  - ✣ services or products were not available elsewhere,
  - ✣ they met the needs of the organization, and
  - ✣ they were easily accessible.
- Compared to other similar services and products, over 75 percent of clients rated the comprehensive centers' services and products as "excellent" or "good" on their:
  - ✣ quality and usefulness;
  - ✣ responsiveness to local conditions;
  - ✣ reflecting sound research or most current thinking in the field;
  - ✣ providing knowledge and expertise not available within their organization; and
  - ✣ usefulness for guiding improvement efforts.

Texas' STAR Center: PSA Survey Findings

PSA's evaluation focused on the quality and impact of the comprehensive center network as a whole as well as that of the individual centers. For each center, clients of two key activities were surveyed.

In the case of the STAR Center, PSA surveyed participants of the Leadership Institute for Bilingual Directors (a three-day institute held in the fall of 1998) and the Excellence and Equity through Technology Network (EETNet) (two-day institutes held in the fall of 1997 and 1998). See boxes below and on the next page for major findings.

Stories of Success

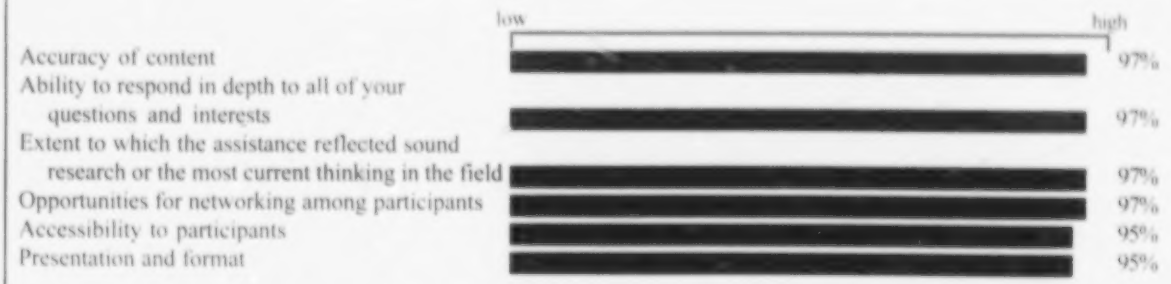
In addition to the PSA report, the centers recently published *Making a Difference for Children in Schools*, success stories from the centers illustrating their contributions in a wide array of contexts – from improving student achievement in mathematics and increasing capacity to teach mathematics at the primary grade levels in Wisconsin to curbing the tide of violence in schools in Gary, Indiana (see www.ccnetwork.org).

The STAR Center's success story focuses on EETNet. EETNet's ultimate goal

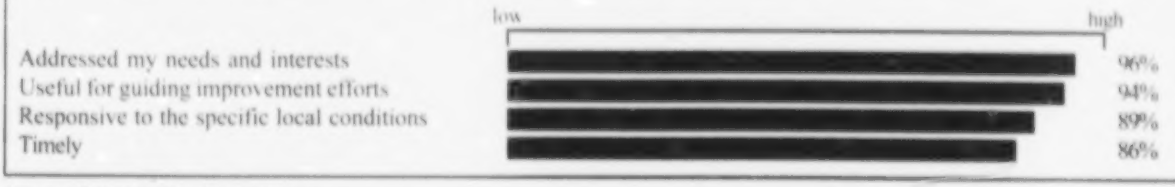
Making a Difference – *continued on page 11*

STAR Center Leadership Institute for Bilingual Directors – PSA Evaluation Findings

Compared with other similar activities available from other sources, how would you rate the quality of the center's assistance?



Compared with similar products and services available from other sources, how would you rate the usefulness if the products and services you received from the comprehensive centers on the following?



Source: Policy Studies Associates

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Making a Difference – continued from page 10

is to help educators prepare all children for an Internet civilization, especially those children that IASA targets: high poverty, homeless and neglected, LEP and others who are usually left behind, especially in the area of technology. EETNet helps students cross the digital divide by helping teachers and administrators increase their technology planning capability and establishing a network of project schools that serve as an ever-growing resource link to other schools seeking similar assistance.

Through EETNet, teachers and technology coordinators from more than 23 school districts implementing Title I schoolwide projects have received ongoing technical assistance and training for increasing the achievement of their students through innovative instruction enhanced by effective use of technology. The STAR Center's comprehensive approach to providing technical assistance targets a variety of areas including budget development, grant writing using examples of successful proposals, strategies for successfully dealing with technology vendors, strategies for overcoming techno-phobia among school staff, and providing information on exemplary technology models implemented at the school level.

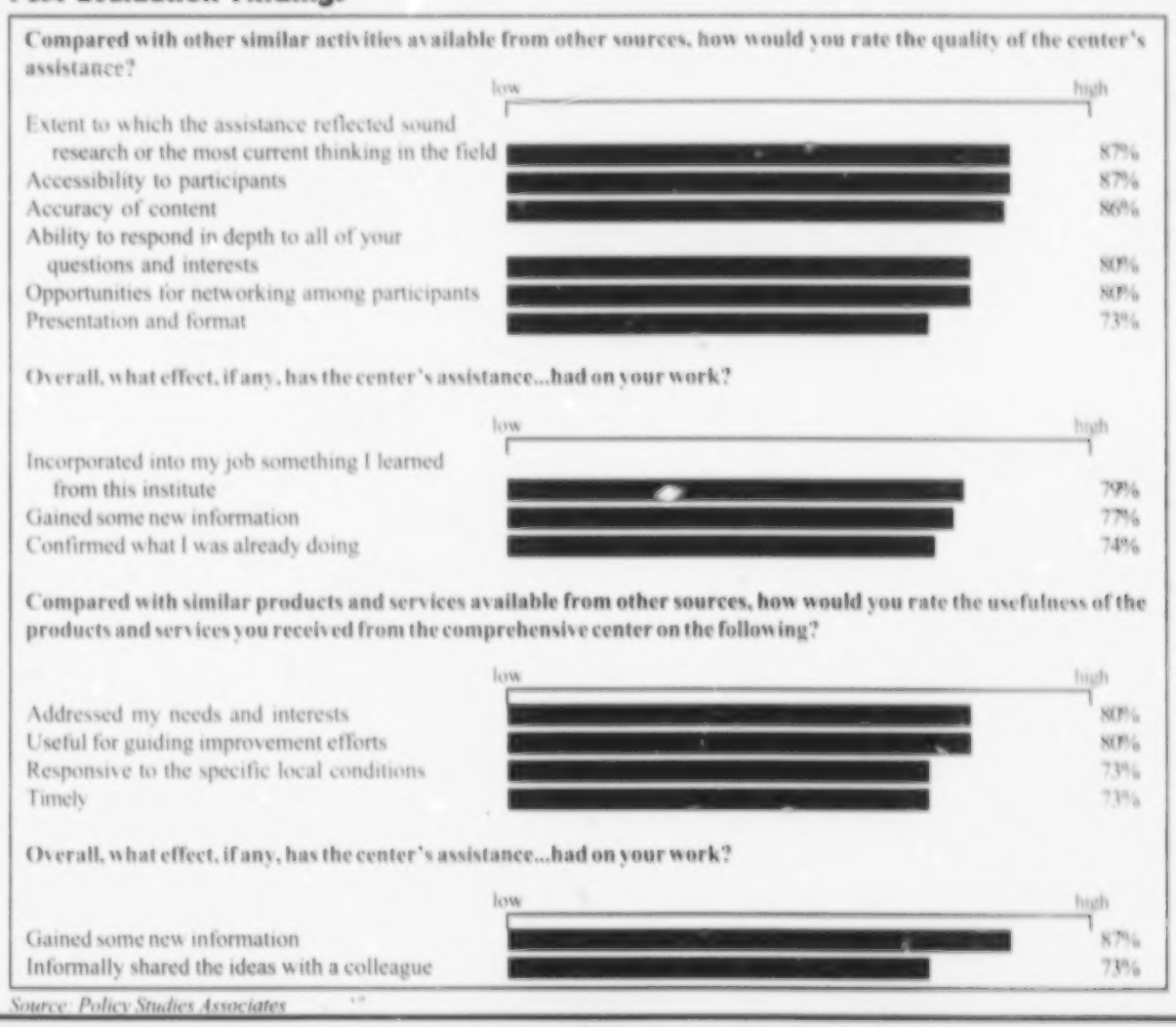
Teams from participating schools attend an annual technology planning institute to help them develop their school's technology plan. Evidence of EETNet's success lies in the fact that all of the participating school teams that completed and submitted grant proposals based on their technology plans were successfully funded. EETNet is developing capacity in campus teams to integrate technology into their schoolwide reform efforts to enhance student achievement.

The STAR Center story is one of 15 that speak to the value of the comprehensive centers and the contributions made at the local level – in classrooms and schools with the greatest needs, from isolated, remote areas to inner-city schools.

The PSA national evaluation report and the comprehensive centers success stories clearly demonstrate that the comprehensive center network provides technical assistance to schools, districts and states that is high quality, useful, and effective for schools and students.

Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., coordinates IDRA's materials development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

STAR Center Excellence and Equity through Technology Network – PSA Evaluation Findings


Compared with other similar activities available from other sources, how would you rate the quality of the center's assistance?
low
high
Extent to which the assistance reflected sound research or the most current thinking in the field
87%
Accessibility to participants
87%
Accuracy of content
86%
Ability to respond in depth to all of your questions and interests
80%
Opportunities for networking among participants
80%
Presentation and format
73%
Overall, what effect, if any, has the center's assistance...had on your work?
low
high
Incorporated into my job something I learned from this institute
79%
Gained some new information
77%
Confirmed what I was already doing
74%
Compared with similar products and services available from other sources, how would you rate the usefulness of the products and services you received from the comprehensive center on the following?
low
high
Addressed my needs and interests
80%
Useful for guiding improvement efforts
80%
Responsive to the specific local conditions
73%
Timely
73%
Overall, what effect, if any, has the center's assistance...had on your work?
low
high
Gained some new information
87%
Informally shared the ideas with a colleague
73%

Source: Policy Studies Associates

Cyberkinder – continued from page 4

Resources

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Windschitl, M. "The WWW and Classroom Research: What Path Should We Take?" *Research News and Comment* (January-February 1998) Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 28-33.

Yánez-Perez, A. "Technology, Teachers and Early Childhood," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 1996).

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Connections... for Early Childhood Education

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1703 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1714
Phone: 703-578-9600 or 1-800-933-ASCD
Fax: 703-575-5400
http://www.ascd.org

Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
220 East 23rd Street, Suite 300
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-7730
Fax: 212-532-7899
http://www.e3pg.com/hippy.htm

Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190
Phone: 210-444-1710
Fax: 210-444-1714
www.idra.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460
Fax: 202-328-1846
http://www.naeyc.org

National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20208
Phone: 202-219-1935
Fax: 202-273-4768
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI/index.html

Parents as Teachers National Center
10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230
St. Louis, Missouri 63132
Phone: 314-432-4330
Fax: 314-432-8963
http://www.patnc.org

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IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus:
Equity and Excellence

ISSN 1069-5672 Volume XXVII, No. 5 May 2000

Bridging the Digital Divide in Our Schools – Achieving Technology Equity for All Students

Laura Chris Green, Ph.D.

Inside this Issue:

- Self-esteem and equity
- Instructional technology resources
- Gender equity math and science workbook
- Racial divide growing

We cannot achieve excellence in education without equity. Every student needs adequate access to instructional resources and support services in order to achieve academically. Nowhere is this truer than in the area of instructional technology. Students who do not have access to computers and the Internet (among other technologies) will get further and further behind their peers who do. They will miss the instant links to information, entertainment, and communication with others that luckier students have. Their school reports will lack the latest data and the professional look of high resolution graphics and desktop publishing. And these students potentially will miss out on the 70 percent of jobs that require moderate or high amounts of computer knowledge, all of which pay well (Linn, 1999). They probably will end up in that 10 percent of low-paying jobs that do not require technical expertise.

This article summarizes the most current data about the *digital divide* regarding those students who need the most support – those who are poor, minority or limited-English-proficient (LEP). It looks first at the data for the U.S. population in general, because having access to technology in the home is as important as having access at school. This article presents data regarding access in school, focussing on *quantity* issues in terms of hardware, software, and Internet access as well as on *quality* issues in terms of how technology is used with these students and how teachers are prepared for technology integration. It concludes with recommendations on how to lessen the divide based on a review of the literature and the author's numerous years of experience in working with bilingual, English as a second language (ESL), and mainstream program teachers on integrating technology into instruction in high poverty and high minority schools.

A Look at the Digital Divide

The term *digital divide* refers to the gap that exists between those groups in the United States who have good access to technology and those who do not. The recent report from the National Telecommunications Information Administration, *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide*, found patterns of computer ownership and Internet access that were similar to those found in previous studies (1999). In short, if you are affluent, young (under 30), college educated, White or Asian, and live in a city, then you are more likely to have technology access than if you are poor, older, less-educated, African American, Hispanic or Native American, and live in a rural area. The ethnic group with the least access to technology is the rural Native American population (half of whom lack phones in their homes), followed by Hispanic and then African American populations.

We would expect socio-economic status to have a major influence on who has access. Computers, modems and Internet service providers (ISPs) are expensive. But

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Bridging the Digital - continued from page 1

the data also suggest that location and race and ethnicity are important factors in the equation. When income is held constant, those who live in rural settings have less access, especially to the Internet, than those who live in metropolitan areas. The majority of users use dial-up modems that rely on phone lines to connect to the Internet. Rural users often cannot afford the long distance charges of connecting to a far away ISP. Faster connection methods such as cable modems and DSL are also only offered in major cities, and wireless and satellite technologies are not yet available in most places.

Several sources of data suggest that race and ethnicity are important factors regardless of socio-economic status. Comparisons of White, African American and Hispanic access to computers and Internet in the home from 1994 to 1998 found that the gap actually *increased* significantly between the groups. For example, the gap widened by 39 percent between Whites and African Americans for home ownership of computers and by 43 percent between Whites and Hispanics.

Another alarming statistic is that, in low-income families, a White child is three times as likely as an African American child to have Internet access and four times as likely as a Hispanic child. Finally, we know that only 40 percent of home computer purchases are for first-time buyers (Potts, 1999). This means that most computers are bought by people who already have computers, who are replacing their old ones or adding additional computers to their households. This is yet another example of those who have getting even more than they had before.

Literacy development, the ability to read and write, is correlated to the presence of books in children's homes and to the presence of readers in their lives. So it is with computer literacy.

We should be sensitive to cultural and linguistic underpinnings for some of these racial and ethnic disparities. For example, the dominance of English in computer-based communication currently at a high of 80 percent also tends to restrict usage by minority populations who speak other languages (Warschauer, in press). For languages that are not Roman alphabet based, the prevalence of ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) makes "computing in other alphabets or character sets inconvenient or impossible." Fortunately the number of non-English web sites and newsgroups is growing rapidly as the number of users in "developing" countries increases and as software, such as web browsers, are adapted for different languages and character sets.

We also need to understand the significance of the unequal access to technology in the homes of poor, minority and LEP students. It is no accident that the term *computer literacy* is used to describe the knowledge and skills that computer users possess. Literacy development, the ability to read and write, is correlated to the presence of books in children's homes and to the presence of readers in their lives. So it is with computer literacy. Children who have technology-using parents and siblings have role models at home who show them how computers are used for daily activities. It is a common and expected part of their lives from which to benefit and enjoy technology just as we were expected to learn to read for a variety of purposes.

My parents provided me with dictionaries, thesauruses and encyclopedias so I could get that A+ on my science and social studies reports. Today's middle-class children have access to the word processing and database programs and Internet web sites that their teachers are increasingly, especially at the secondary level, expecting them to use for their homework assignments. And they get to play the computer games, select the movies they will view, read about last night's ball game, and otherwise enjoy the entertainment values of technology that will help motivate them to master the intricacies of new technologies. Many of us learned to read largely from comic books and magazines. Many children today learn important computer skills by pursuing their interests through games and the web.

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The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, ©2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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Sticks and Stones – What Words Are to Self-Esteem

Rogelio López del Bosque, Ed.D.

Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words can hurt even more. As children, we hear a lot of "don't," "can't" and "shouldn't." Typically, these words are for our own good. But too many children also hear disparaging words implying that there is something wrong with them. Such words, innuendoes and perceptions can have a negative effect on children's self-esteem.

Do you remember your first day of school and the nervous excitement that came with it? Going to school for the first time was an exhilarating experience that most of us recall quite vividly. In my case, I was ready to learn. I was ready for my turn at school just like my older brothers and sisters before me. The night before, the excitement kept me awake. I slept very little. I had a new pair of shoes, new clothes and a colorful book satchel that my sister had bought for me with crayons, scissors, pencils and erasers in it. I thought life was so good. It just could not get any better than this.

I also knew that on the next day I would have to use English at school. For me, this was not problem. I already knew enough English. With help from my sister Maria, I had memorized two important phrases: "May I go to the restroom?" and "May I get a drink of water?" Maria made it clear that the words "May I" were essential. When you speak to the teacher, you must be polite and show respect. With these two English phrases, I was ready.

As I walked into the school with my sister, I remember smiling with pride and full of that desire to learn. Now that I recall, my sister gave me a sense of security. She had been directed by my Mom to take me to school the first day. (Mom did not feel she could do it herself since she spoke Spanish.) I was ready, and I know my family was proud. My parents were probably very happy that I was the last of 13 children to finally go to school.

Shortly after arriving in the classroom and meeting the teacher, I recall very vividly learning that I was no longer going to be called by my name, Rogelio. I was given a new name. I thought it was part of being in school.

Of course, I found out later that the name Rogelio was too difficult for the teacher to pronounce. There was something wrong with me. So my name had to be changed. This was the beginning of my feeling different.

Was there something wrong with my name? It really did not matter. This was what schools did, and it would help me learn – so I thought. I rationalized: Big deal, my Mom does not even call me Rogelio. She calls me "Rogelito." So on my first day of school, I was given a new name so I would fit in with everyone else and I would be ready to learn.

Little did I know that the excitement of that first day of school would soon change to discomfort. I really could not identify exactly what I was feeling. But something was not right.

During my years of school, I experienced low expectations and hostile attitudes on the part of some teachers, administrators, and other students. I had difficulty assimilating into this unfamiliar environment. Continuously, I was made aware that speaking Spanish had bad consequences. I was also told many times that I should not speak Spanish because I used an incorrect form. Was the language I learned at home inferior? I had learned to express my love, desires and fears in that language. Of course, my parents must have been a very bad influence by teaching me such language, this Tex-Mex.

Many questions came up for me. Do I have bad genes or do I come from a less intelligent gene pool? I could not speak English the right away (those two phrases

Sticks and Stones - continued on page 4

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- ✧ Internet resources
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This month's question is…
What is the key ingredient to meaningful parent involvement?

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Sticks and Stones - continued from page 3

were not enough after all). I already had many skills that I had learned from my mother and siblings, but I could not translate them yet. I felt out of place. I ached because I wanted so badly to learn and fit in just like everyone else.

I finally understood the reason my prayers were never answered. I was using an inferior language that God did not understand or like. Although my father was illiterate, my mother was well educated in her native Mexico. She taught me the value of the language, so very much about the culture along with the *corridos*, *cuentos*, etc. But at school I learned that there was no value in this, that it was un-American. On top of this, I was criticized for speaking English with an accent and for using incorrect sentence structure, forms of the subject pronouns and verb tenses.

In essence, very early in life, it was made very clear to me that there was something not right with me. My name was not good enough, neither was my language. Even when I learned to speak English, something was always wrong with how I did so. Surprisingly, I was criticized by other Hispanics and on occasion called a "burro," because I could not speak English perfectly.

What about self-esteem? Like all children, there were so many qualities that I brought with me to school that were valuable. I was eager to learn, eager to please and eager to do a good job and feel right just like everyone. Instead, like so many other students with similar backgrounds, I was made to feel wrong, unintelligent and inferior. My whole person was in jeopardy.

Many of us have survived these unpleasant and harsh years of our lives in spite of such attitudes. Yet many more have fallen by the wayside. This can be seen in our high dropout rates, for example.

The Value of Self-Esteem

A student's self-esteem cannot be improved simply by using flowering adjectives. It is, instead, about the students' feelings, thoughts and even all that they believe about themselves. G. Dunne, D. Schilling and D. Cowan define self-esteem: "It is our unique perception of our worth and worthiness" (1990). It is about working with the affective domain rather than placing all efforts on the cognition and psychomotor. Helping to build the self-esteem of students requires action and knowledge of their strengths.

Focusing on students' deficits (or what people assume are deficits) demands much energy and results in negative consequences for students and others. Focusing on students' strengths is easier to do, is less stressful, and results in success.

Approval and respect for students are just the beginning of what we can do to nurture their self esteem. But this is something that cannot be done only by one or two people. It takes the entire staff, including secretaries, cafeteria workers, janitorial workers and the community as a whole.

The Search Institute recently published *Taking Assets Building Personally* (Roehlkepartain, 1999). Through extensive research on children and youth, the institute identified 40 building blocks that are essential for young people to successfully grow and develop. These building blocks represent positive experiences, opportunities and relationships that all young people need from the time they are born until they are adults. These building blocks are referred to as *developmental assets*. They have a tremendous influence on young people's lives. These assets make it more likely youths will be engaged in positive behaviors.

The Search Institute divides the developmental assets into eight categories (see box), the last of which is "positive identity." There are four building blocks in this category:

- Personal power – Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- Self-esteem – Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- Sense of purpose – Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- Positive view of personal future – Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.

Roehlkepartain states that while some of these factors are part of a person's temperament, "others are shaped as they grow by the people around them."

Focusing on students' deficits (or what people assume are deficits) demands much energy and results in negative consequences for students and others. Focusing on students' strengths is easier to do, is less stressful, and results in success.

These four building blocks are highly evident in IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – an internationally-recognized cross-age tutoring program in schools across the United States, Great Britain and Brazil. Since its inception in San Antonio in 1984 until 1999, the program has kept more than 7,700 students in school, young people who were previously at risk of dropping out. According to the Valued Youth creed, *all students are valuable, none is expendable*. This philosophy is helping more than 217

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The Eight Categories of Developmental Assets

1. **Support** – Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments.
2. **Empowerment** – Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.
3. **Boundaries and Expectations** – Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" or "out of bounds."
4. **Constructive Use of Time** – Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.
5. **Commitment to Learning** – Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.
6. **Positive Values** – Youth need to develop strong values that guide their choices.
7. **Social Competencies** – Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life.
8. **Positive Identity** – Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

Source: Roehlkepartain, J.L. *Taking Assets Building Personally: An Action and Reflection Workbook* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Search Institute, 1999).

Sticks and Stones - *continued from page 4*
schools in 24 cities keep 98 percent of Valued Youth students in school, keeping these young people in the classroom and learning. For more than 16 years, this program has made a visible difference in the lives of more than 79,000 children, families and educators.

In the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, secondary students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school are placed as tutors of elementary students, enabling the older students to make a difference in the younger students' lives. With a growing sense of responsibility and pride, the tutors stay and do better in school.

In the 1998-99 school year, there were 1,066 tutors in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. Only 10 tutors dropped out of school, which is a dropout rate of 0.9 percent. In other words, 1,056 students – who had been considered at-risk of dropping out – stayed in school.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale is used to measure students' self-concept before and after their participation in the program. On average, the tutors' self-concept improved last year after their participation in the program at a statistically significant level (59.2 at pre-test to 61.9 at post-test). All subscales increased significantly including behavior, intellectual and school status, physical appearance, anxiety, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction.

The students' teacher coordinators were asked to evaluate the tutors at the beginning and end of the school year in 15 areas, from self-concept to academic achievement. Their pre-and post-test ratings increased significantly in all areas: self-concept, disciplinary record, academic achievement, attendance, interest in class and school, future goals, ability to socialize with schoolmates, ability to socialize into their school environment, relationships with their parents, relationships with teachers, relationships with administrators, relationships with counselors, desire to graduate, and hygiene and dress.

The elementary school students who were being tutored also increased in self-concept, disciplinary record, academic achievement, attendance, interest in class and school, ability to socialize with schoolmates and into their school environment, and their hygiene and dress.

Most parents of tutors (73 percent) reported a positive change in their child's attitude and behavior regarding school. They attributed the changes to their child's involvement in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. The changes included greater responsibility and maturity, greater interest in school, and higher self-esteem.

The key to the program's success is in valuing students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and sustaining their efforts with effective, coordinated strategies. It builds on students' strengths. Students are valued, supported, acknowledged, rewarded, celebrated, nurtured and helped in every way possible. They are provided with outside experiences through field trips, guest speakers from the community, and a major celebration at the end of the year where they are recognized for the wonderful work that they have done. In most of the program sites in England, each tutor has a mentor.

What do we get in return? The tutors provide creative teaching. They teach young children to read, smile and feel good about themselves. The tutors become role models for these students (tutees). They are proud of their tutee's progress. Tutors show a more matured and responsible attitude. They take pride in the fact that they are helping other children as well as helping themselves, their siblings, their parents, their schools, and their communities.

In addition to the changes this program produces in young people, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program succeeds because it subtly but powerfully challenges and ultimately changes people's beliefs and behaviors about students for whom expectations were low.

Self-Esteem Fostered by Equity

If we look carefully at the research that has been conducted with the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program throughout all these years, we find that the model certainly lends itself to meeting the goals of educational equity. When IDRA's Bradley Scott wrote, "The real issue is making school work for *all* students" he meant those students who are at-risk of being suspended, or of being expelled or excluded from school, and all

Sticks and Stones - *continued on page 6*

Internet Web Sites on Technology

Digital Divide

Closing the Digital Divide www.digitaldivide.gov
Digital Divide Network, Benton Foundation www.digitaldividenewtork.org
National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce www.ntia.doc.gov

Integrating Technology into Teaching

The CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) Cookbook www.owlnet.rice.edu/~ling417/index.html
Classroom Connect www.classroom.net
Computer Resources for ESL 207.236.117.20/orlac
ESL Interactive www.ialc.wsu.edu/eslint/eslindex.html
Internet Safety www.mcrel.org/resources/technology/safety.asp
Teachers' Internet Use Guide (STAR Center) www.starcenter.org
WebQuest Page edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html

Technical Assistance for Technology

ERIC Clearinghouse – Information and Technology ericir.syr.edu/ithome
Excellence and Equity through Technology Network (STAR Center) www.starcenter.org
North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium www.ncrtec.org
National Center for Technology Planning www.nctp.com
South Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium www.scrtec.org
Texas Center for Educational Technology www.tcet.unt.edu

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

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Sticks and Stones - continued from page 5

those who for some reason or another are seen as at-risk of failing and leaving school (see Scott, 2000). If we look at the five goals of educational equity we can see that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program supports these goals.

The first goal is ***comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes***. In the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, there have been higher achievement levels for all the students of varied backgrounds, and there is evidence of closing the gap between those who are considered "at-risk" and those who are not. Based on participant interviews and journals, it is evident that these students have developed a better outlook on life as well as of school. They are certainly staying in school and developing higher self-esteem. Tutors' disciplinary referrals have been curtailed in great numbers, and attendance has improved significantly. Through field trips, many of these students are exposed to colleges and universities. They can visualize themselves in higher education for the first time. Parents become involved from the very beginning by approving tutors' participation in the program. Students and teachers spend one hour each week to debrief and learn more about tutoring. Here, students are supported, nurtured and encouraged to develop goals for themselves and the students they are tutoring.

The second goal of educational equity is ***equitable access and inclusion***. In the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, student selection is based on need, and schools follow different procedures for enrolling students in the program. In most cases, student selection is based on recommendations, interviews, and specific criteria. IDRA provides ongoing training and technical assistance for schools to better serve their students. Information about the program is provided to parents in their home language, and they are encouraged to attend frequent meetings and events, some of which are held bilingually.

The program is an assets-based model rather than a deficit model. The first of the seven tenets that express the philosophy of the program is, "All students can learn." Tutors are constantly being recognized by teachers, teacher coordinators, principals, and counselors. From the beginning, all the aforementioned parties must commit to make the program work. Personnel at the tutees' elementary schools welcome the students to do their tutoring lessons. The secondary teacher coordinators and staff encourage these tutors as the school year progresses. Communication between schools for the program creates a bridge, which is particularly important within the feeder patterns. The program fosters parent and school communication and relationships along with fostering relationships with community organizations (such as local Coca-Cola bottlers) that contribute to the program.

The third goal is ***equitable treatment***. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors are valued by all the people involved in the process. Sometimes there is reluctance at first, but these feelings turn to respect for the tutors as they become excellent tutors, great role models and in many cases, end up doing things to help children that teachers themselves could never do. The tutors must go through a minimum of eight hours of training, getting to know the school where they will be assigned, the principal, the teacher and most important of all, the students they will be assigned to tutor. They have a process to follow that looks carefully at each tutee. Tutors and tutees do not work in isolation but in the primary classroom and in consultation with the tutees' teachers.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a dropout prevention program. Yet, many schools have included the program as part

Sticks and Stones - continued on page 7

Did You Know?

Seventy percent of all jobs in 2000 require some computer knowledge. Only 20 percent of jobs provide decent pay and do not require computer knowledge.

– E. Linn, "Tomorrow's Jobs: How High-Tech Are They," *Equity Coalition* (Fall 1999)

In 1994, 3 percent of all U.S. public school instructional rooms (classrooms, labs, libraries, etc.) were connected to the Internet. By 1999, 63 percent were connected.

– National Center for Education Statistics, *Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-99* (2000)

Households with incomes of $75,000 and higher are more than 20 times as likely to have access to the Internet than those at the lowest income levels and more than nine times as likely to have a computer at home.

– National Telecommunications Information Administration, *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide* (1999)

Research shows that helping teachers learn how to integrate technology into the curriculum is a critical factor for successfully implementing technology applications in schools. Only 15 percent of U.S. teachers reported having at least nine hours of training in education technology in 1994.

– Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center, *Computers and Classrooms: The Status of Technology in U.S. Schools* (1999)

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

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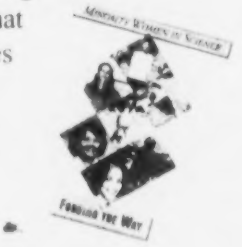
Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and Maria Aurora Yánez, M.A.

A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

We must ensure that minority girls are not left behind as progress is made toward narrowing gender and racial gaps in math and science education. This is an innovative resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists.



You will find:

- Profiles of seven minority women scientists who have surmounted barriers to forge the way for themselves and future scientists.
- Science lessons for the classroom that cover such topics as acid/base chemistry, earth science, wildlife and environmental science, and biology.
- Life skills lessons for the classroom that cover topics such as getting college information from the school counselor, identifying a support system, reaching goals, knowing self-worth, having community pride, overcoming stereotypes, and linking hobbies with career choices.
- The opportunity to use this guide to plan with other teachers, from other departments, using the stories of these inspirational women as the basis for cross-curricular lessons for students.

"Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

(**Student Workbook** ISBN 1-878550-67-5; 2000; 32 pages; paperback; $6.50)
(**Teacher's Guide** ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

Distributed exclusively by the Intercultural Development Research Association; 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714; e-mail: contact@idra.org. *It is IDRA policy that all orders totalling less than $30 be pre-paid.*

Sticks and Stones *- continued from page 6*

of their school improvement plans as a means of curtailing disciplinary referrals, increasing attendance, and improving parent involvement.

The fourth goal is ***equitable opportunity to learn***. Tutors in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program are given lessons each week for debriefing with the teacher coordinators. In many cases, other teachers become involved both at the primary and secondary levels. Tutors improve their own literacy and math skills in order to teach their tutees. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on what they are doing in their tutoring lessons and what is going on in their classes at the secondary level. In the hour each week that they spend together, the tutors engage in lessons about tutoring or to enhance their literacy or self-esteem. Constant feedback is provided to each tutor, and there are different manners of acknowledgment throughout the school year. Certificates of achievement and participation are provided for each tutor along with an end-of-year celebration, field trips and tangible gift items. Tutors receive a stipend in acknowledgment for the work that they do as tutors.

The final goal is ***equitable resources***. Funding for many of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program sites comes from Title VII projects, state compensatory education monies, foundations, and even some general funding program monies from the school districts. In many cases, the program has been institutionalized by the district as part of its plan to decrease the dropout rate.

The teacher coordinator is usually specifically selected by the school for his or her ability to work positively with these students. This teacher and other personnel at the secondary and elementary schools go through training at the start of the program and receive follow-up training throughout the year. They all become part of a team that reflects the philosophy of the program.

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Creating Access

So how can we ease the digital divide that poor, minority and LEP children experience in their homes? Three immediate possibilities come to mind:

- Provide students and parents with take-home technologies.
- Increase students' and parents' access through community centers.
- Improve students' access to technology, and the quality of that access, in their classrooms and schools.

A number of innovative projects have taken the first approach, providing students with graphing calculators, laptop computers, and e-mail accounts they can use at home. Usually the equipment is loaned to the students just as they are issued textbooks and lab equipment. Some programs have a checkout system for parents and/or students for hardware and software, together with some basic training on how to use them. In the tradition of the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) program that gives books to students, some programs are finding ways to give the equipment to students permanently.

Community access centers are another good approach. The federal E-Rate program has made Internet access more affordable by providing telecommunications discounts to schools, libraries and hospitals that serve low-income communities (see Montes, 1998). To date over $3 billion has gone into this effort.

In Texas, the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) has provided additional financial assistance to libraries, schools, rural health care organizations, and colleges and universities to facilitate Internet access since 1995. Researchers from the University of Texas at Austin recently conducted a fascinating study of public access centers in Austin. The city was considered by the researchers as a "best case scenario" because local corporations, colleges and universities, public libraries, and community-based organizations such as Austin FreeNet have worked hard to be at the forefront of public access to computers and the Internet for those who cannot afford it (Lentz et al, 2000). The researchers concluded that libraries and community centers are good places for "disadvantaged" members of the community to get started using the Internet, but there is a need for more computers allowing longer access times, better training for clients and staff, and more help desk services.

The third approach, improving both the quantity and quality of access to technology for poor, minority and LEP students in our nation's schools, is the most promising one. It is also the most complex and difficult one to implement. It is relatively easy to remedy the inequities in terms of infrastructure – the hardware, software, wiring, the "stuff" – that schools need. But it is very difficult to change how well the schools use the "stuff" with students.

Improving the infrastructure will just take time and money, and the business community and federal and state governments have been fairly deliberate in

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Racial Divide Continues to Grow

Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide, July 1999

This report on the telecommunications and information technology gap in America provides comprehensive data on the level of access by Americans to telephones, computers, and the Internet. It includes valuable information about where Americans are gaining access, what they are doing with their online connections, and provides trendline information since 1984.

According to the report, the number of Americans accessing the Internet has grown rapidly in the last year; yet, in the midst of this general expansion, the "digital divide" between information "haves" and "have nots" continues to widen.

Overview

Race or ethnic origin is a likely factor in determining who has access to computers and the Internet. Americans today are accessing the Internet with more regularity, and Black and Hispanic households are twice as likely to own computers today as they were in 1994. Yet, many race or origin groups are losing ground in computer and Internet connectivity when compared to the progress of Whites and those of Asian/Pacific Island descent. When holding income constant, Black and Hispanic households are still far less likely to have Internet access. Of all race or origin groups, households of Asian/Pacific descent have a clear lead in computer penetration and Internet access rates.

Highlights

- Whites are more likely to have access to the Internet from home, than Blacks or Hispanics have from any location.
- Black and Hispanic households are 2/5 as likely to have home Internet access as White Households.
- At the highest incomes ($75,000+), the White/Black divide for computer ownership decreased by 76.2 percent between 1994 and 1998.
- American Indians/Eskimos/Aleuts, Blacks, and Hispanics more often turn to Internet access outside the home, compared to Whites.
- Blacks using the Internet outside the home are 1.91 times more likely to use a public library or a community center for access than Whites. Other "non-Hispanic" minorities (including American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts and Asian/Pacific Islanders) are 1.24 times as likely as Whites.

Significant Findings

The "digital divide" between Whites and most minorities continues to grow. There are signs, however, that higher incomes are helping to narrow and could eventually close the gap. Eventually, falling prices may allow a greater number of people – regardless of race – to purchase computers and connect to the Internet. Waiting for prices to fall, however, is a long-term solution to the racial divide. In the short-term, community access centers (such as schools, public libraries, and community centers) can help to narrow the racial connectivity divide.

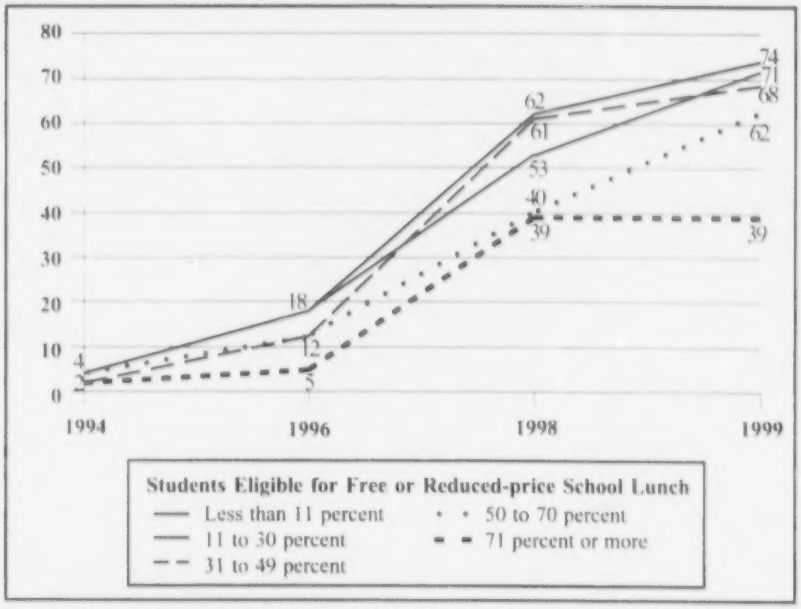
Reprinted with permission from *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide* (Washington, D.C.: National Telecommunications Information Administration, 1999) http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide/factsheets/racial-divide.htm.

Bridging the Digital - *continued from page 8*
providing additional funding for technology in the schools. As a result, significant gains have been made in technology acquisitions for all schools (see box at right), including high poverty and high minority schools. Recent reports from the Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center (Coley, Cradler and Engel, 1999) and from the National Center for Education Statistics (2000) show that at least 98 percent of all schools have computers, 85 percent have multimedia computers, 75 percent have access to cable television, and 90 percent have Internet access. A recent teacher survey conducted by *Education Week* found that 97 percent of teachers use a computer at home or school for professional purposes (2000).

There are still, however, some inequities in terms of infrastructure for schools that we will need to address as we decide how to spend the technology monies being given to us. The data show that the higher the percentage of poor and minority students in a school, the lower their access to technology. Of special concern is the fact that 90 percent of high poverty schools have Internet access, but only 39 percent of classrooms in these schools have access as compared to 74 percent of the classrooms in low poverty schools. Schools that had one computer with Internet access in the librarian's or principal's office got counted as "connected" schools. Students need computers in their classrooms where they can use them if they are to have meaningful access to the Internet.

Another inequity is in the *kind* of Internet access schools have. Only 50 percent of high poverty schools have dedicated lines as compared to 72 percent of low poverty schools. This affects the speed of the transmissions received. As anyone who has waited several minutes with a group of 20 or more students for a web page to download knows, lengthy "downtimes" can be deadly for the flow of an otherwise well-managed lesson. Every infrastructure indicator studied found at least minor inequities when comparing high poverty and low poverty schools. A final example can be seen in the only 33 percent of high minority schools that have local area networks (LANs) as compared to 41 percent of low minority schools.

Percent of Instructional Rooms with Internet Access in Public Schools, by Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-price School Lunch



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-99* (2000).

Using Technology for Learning

As important as infrastructure is, how teachers and students use the technologies available to them is even more important. It is in this area that the quantitative data as well as anecdotal reports from the field present a disturbing picture. Reports from the field include my own years of experience in schools primarily in Texas, most of them high poverty schools, and in interactions with teachers from throughout the country, many of whom have been bilingual educators. The picture that emerges reveals computers are predominately used as electronic workbooks for basic skills remediation rather than being used to stimulate student creativity, to solve problems, to record and manipulate data, or to create multimedia presentations that summarize what students have learned.

I have also seen that students and teachers in special programs, such as ESL, often get the least access to technology and get the older, hand-me-down equipment from the regular teachers.

A final trend I have seen has been that many teachers, even when they have the requisite hardware and software at their fingertips, do not use technology at all or they use it poorly because of a lack of time, training and technical support. This is a general trend for all teachers, in high and low poverty schools and in regular and special programs. But it is especially acute for special programs teachers.

Many high poverty schools have used Title I, Title VII and other special program monies to purchase instructional computers that they then install in computer labs for basic skills remediation. Often schools have funded expensive Instructional Learning Systems (ILSs) and have scheduled Title I students for daily sessions during which they use tutorial and drill-and-practice software programs for reading and math skills development.

As a result, Title I students and students in high poverty schools (many of whom are minority) report using computers more frequently for instruction than non-Title I students (Coley, Cradler and Engel, 1999). It has also been found that minority students do more data processing and computer programming and less using of computers to solve problems in math and science than do majority students. In other words, they learn how to enter data into spreadsheets. They do not learn to design their own spreadsheets to help them find answers to mathematical and scientific

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inquiries.

Another pattern involves having minority students do more word processing and less using of computers for English courses. This means that they are spending more time learning to use the keyboard (the modern version of touch typing) and less time using computers for creative writing and other student-centered approaches. Predictably, it has been found that minority students like computers less than majority students.

Why are so many teachers using instructional technology in such unproductive ways, especially with minority and LEP students? Data from the *Education Week* teacher survey provide us with some of the answers (2000). Anecdotal reports provide others.

In most schools it appears that only a few teachers embrace technology, using it to excite and motivate students. This cadre of elite technology users forges ahead of the rest, using their own time to learn about new technology applications and their own money to buy new equipment and software. Unfortunately, they often do not share their expertise with others, even when they would like to do so, for a variety of complex social and organizational reasons.

The picture that emerges reveals computers are predominately used as electronic workbooks for basic skills remediation rather than being used to stimulate student creativity, to solve problems, to record and manipulate data, or to create multimedia presentations that summarize what students have learned.

Only one third of teachers surveyed by *Education Week* reported that they use software or the Internet for instruction more than minimally. Of the 53 percent who said they use software at least some of the time, 87 percent use software developed to teach a specific subject (translation: mostly drill-and-practice software); 80 percent use general productivity tools such as word processing, spreadsheet and database programs; and 66 percent use reference tools such as CD-ROM encyclopedias.

Since schools often require computer literacy courses, many of those who report using general productivity tools are using them so that students can learn keyboarding or practice data entry skills. Using the tools to create products – the most recommended way to integrate technology into instruction – is probably less common.

When teachers were asked why they do not use software or the Internet for instruction, they reported the following reasons:

- Software is too expensive.
- There is a lack of computers in the classroom or computers with Internet access.
- There is a lack of time to prepare and preview software or web sites.
- There is a lack of training on software.
- Too much time is needed to use technology.
- The school's computers are not powerful enough.
- Technologies are not aligned with curriculum and assessment.
- It is difficult to find software to meet student needs (a greater concern for secondary than elementary teachers).

The first reason given, that software is too expensive, was cited by 82 percent of the teachers. I find this is an interesting one. The drill-and-practice software that more teachers seem to prefer for instruction tends to be significantly more expensive than general productivity tool software, and it interests and motivates students significantly less. On the other hand, it takes significantly less time and effort for teachers and students to learn how to use it. It also fits more closely to the teacher-directed, basic skills approaches many teachers use rather than the higher order thinking, student-centered approaches recommended by educational researchers and experts. In other words, teachers may not know how to use the technology tools given to them because they do not understand the teaching and learning paradigms behind more creative uses of instructional technology (Trotter, 1999).

A specific real life example of a mismatch between the potentials for instructional technology and the knowledge base of teachers comes to mind. Ten years ago, I was principal at an elementary school that received one of the first technology innovation grants by the Texas Education Agency. We used the funds to purchase a Writing to Read lab for kindergarten and first grade students. We sent several teachers to Atlanta to be trained at the IBM headquarters. The training showed them how to use the hardware and software they needed so that students could use the lab.

But I discovered late in the year that the teachers lacked the knowledge about emergent literacy and a process approach to writing they needed in order to take full advantage of the equipment. They had not had the master's and doctoral coursework in reading that I possessed. They had not studied the writings of Sylvia Ashton Warner, Roach Van Allen, Donald Graves and Lucy Calkins. They did not know how to use developmentally appropriate techniques as I did to successfully teach Spanish dominant primary students to read and write.

My own son was in first grade at this school that year. In April, his teacher brought me a paragraph he had written in the lab about our dog, Bud. She was amazed that he had been able to draft this simple story using invented spelling and his life experiences. I was appalled that I had submitted my son to a teacher who had failed to build on the excellent foundation for reading and writing that I and his previous teachers had given him. I also realized that if my son had not learned to read and write on grade level, all children in that classroom were significantly behind. I wish I could say that this teacher was unique at the school, but unfortunately she represents the norm.

Recommendations

Suffice it to say that a few hours of instruction on how to insert a CD-ROM into a drive and start up a drill-and-practice program will not transform teaching and learning in our schools. High quality training, however, that is followed-up with sufficient training and technical support can make a dramatic difference in how well teachers integrate technology into instruction (see box at right).

The *Education Week* study also

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found that teachers who participate in the software selection process rather than merely receiving software provided to them by central office used it much more and were more positive about the software they had in their classrooms. In addition to including as many teachers as possible in the evaluation and selection of software that the district purchases, I recommend the following to schools and districts that want to be leaders in the area of instructional technology.

1. Ensure that teachers have adequate technical support.

"For lack of a nail the kingdom was lost." In many classrooms, computers sit idle because a $10-mouse is broken, a plug is not secure in its socket, or no one has gotten around to installing a certain software program. All teachers should be trained to do some simple equipment trouble shooting and minor repairs themselves. They should not have to wait for overburdened technology coordinators to get around to them. In other cases, the problem may require the coordinator's attention, but many districts are severely understaffed in this area.

One solution is to train a few classroom teachers to perform mid-level repairs, software installations, and other operations that require only moderate amounts of technical knowledge. These teachers can then help their peers, reserving calls to coordinators for more serious cases. Ultimately however the solution will be to spend adequate amounts of money on technical support staff. The most successful programs seem to be those where the school has a full-time technology coordinator assigned to one school only. When school technology budgets are decided, providing training and technical support should receive as much attention as providing hardware and software.

2. Make sure that teachers have the hardware and software they need for the instructional technology approaches they will be trained to use.

Nothing seems to turn teachers off more than a technology workshop in which they are shown how to use a piece of equipment or software product that they do not have in their classrooms. They know that they will need additional practice when they return to their schools, but they cannot be expected to wait for the practice time or go somewhere inconvenient to acquire it.

One productive approach is to give teachers who attend training the software or the hardware they need to implement the recommended approach. This provides them with easy access, while it also becomes an incentive for teachers to attend and apply the training.

3. Focus training on how to integrate technology into instruction, not just on the technology itself.

Teacher training should focus on instruction, not on the relevant technologies (Green, 1995). For example, a series of training sessions might focus first on how to engage students in genuine scientific inquiries. Then teachers can learn how to use spreadsheets and databases and how to communicate with scientific experts via the Internet. This means that your trainers need to be knowledgeable about both topics, instruction and technology. It may be difficult to find a trainer with both kinds of expertise, especially if you want to train teachers to serve special populations such as bilingual students, a third kind of expertise.

One solution is to take a team approach to training, engaging curriculum specialists as well as technology coordinators, with the curriculum specialists taking the lead in planning the training. Be sure to include your special populations experts when dealing with those programs or, even better, have them be part of the training team because virtually all teachers have teaching responsibility for non-mainstream students.

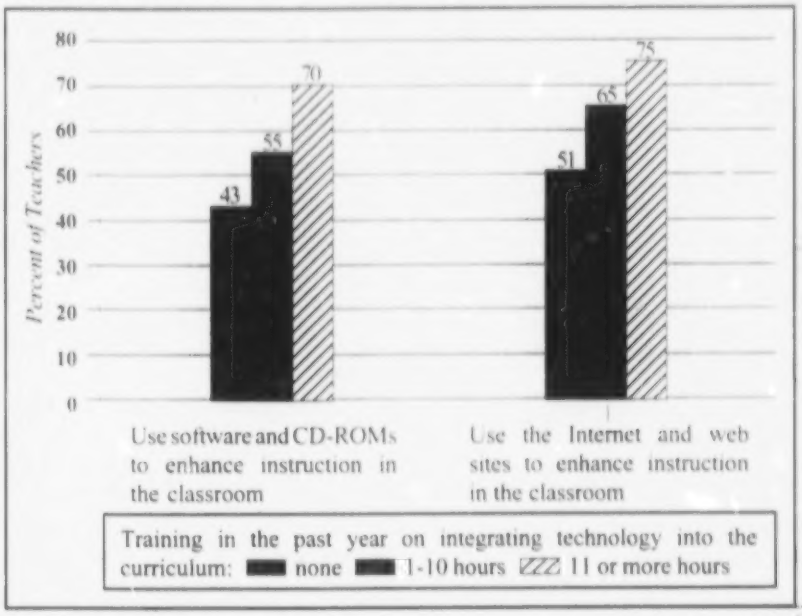
4. Focus the training on tools for language development and problem solving.

The primary need that low achieving, especially LEP, students have is for the development of communication and thinking skills. Technology tools that engage them in listening, speaking, reading, writing and solving problems will develop both. Train teachers to use the power of desktop publishing and the Internet to give students an audience for their voices and ideas. Nothing motivates students to write more than knowing that someone will read

Bridging the Digital - continued on page 12

Percent of Teachers Who Use Technology to Enhance Instruction, by Number of Training Hours

Teachers who had more training to integrate technology into the curriculum in the past 12 months are much more likely to be using software and the Internet in their classroom lessons.



Source: *Education Week*. "Technology Counts '99: Building the Digital Curriculum" (2000).

Digital Divide and Instructional Technology Resources

Closing the Digital Divide
Serves as a gateway for federal government-related digital divide initiatives. The site also provides links to related research reports. www.digitaldivide.gov

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Education Week's 1999 National Survey of Teachers' Use of Digital Content
Rockaway Park, NY: Education Market Research, 2000
http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc99/articles/survey.htm

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Excellence and Equity through Technology Network (EETNet)
This STAR Center* web-based resource helps schools develop and implement innovative technology plans to increase student achievement. Its web site is full of technology planning resources including: technology success stories, grant information, a technology plan template, and online resources.
http://www.starcenter.org/services/main.htm#it

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Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide
National Telecommunications Information Administration (1999)
http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide

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Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-1999
National Center for Education Statistics (2000)
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/2000086.pdf

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STAR Center* – Instructional Technology Priority Area
This site provides abstracts of publications, funding information, research links, and links to resources and tools. http://www.starcenter.org/priority/priority6.htm

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Teachers' Internet Use Guide
Using this online tool by the STAR Center*, teachers can design, develop, implement, and evaluate standards-based lessons. Teachers save time and energy by using links to online lessons and curriculum units that can be customized for a class. Users can also submit their own lessons to this free dynamic online bank of teacher-created lessons.
http://www.starcenter.org/services/main.htm#it

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Technology Counts '99: Building the Digital Curriculum
Education Week (2000)
The most comprehensive analysis to date of teachers' use of educational software and web sites. It includes a new, first-of-its-kind survey on the nation's investment in school technology and detailed state-by-state and national statistics. http://www.edweek.org/sreports/tc99

**The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.*

See the IDRA "Field Trip" for more resources at www.idra.org.

Bridging the Digital - continued from page 11
what they have written. Show teachers ways to use computers with two or more students at a time rather than always relying on a one-computer-per-student mode of operation (Green, 1997). When two or more students work together using a computer, a scanner, a video or digital camera, they naturally talk about what they are seeing and experiencing. They communicate about the task, thus developing their communication skills.

5. Focus the training on how to use the tools to create a product.

Put teachers and students in control of technology, not the other way around. They can create a specific product such as a slideshow presentation, a web site, an electronic book report, or a graphically exciting poster. Doing so taps into student creativity, is highly motivating and provides teachers with tangible pieces of evidence that they can evaluate for student learning. It also offers excellent opportunities for teachers to organize students into cooperative teams who learn how to work together to accomplish a specific task, a life skill highly prized by today's employers.

Teachers can learn how to do this with students by using the tools to create products themselves. They can use *Inspiration*, a concept mapping tool, to create multidisciplinary lesson plans or *PowerPoint* to create slideshows that they use to introduce students to a new science or social studies unit. They will walk away from the experience having the basics of the technology tool, seeing what it is capable of and having a product they can use immediately in their classrooms.

6. Train teachers on how to select, find and evaluate software and web sites.

Few teachers have knowledge about the wide variety of specific software programs and web sites that are out there, nor do they have the time to preview and evaluate them. This is even truer regarding software and web sites for special populations, such as those who are learning in their native languages or older students who cannot read on grade level. These kinds of instructional technology resources are much less common and harder to find. Training sessions should devote a significant proportion of time to having teachers explore the software and web site recommendations of the trainers.

***Bridging the Digital** - continued on page 13*

Bridging the Digital - continued from page 12
This will provide them with hands-on experience with the resources as well as showing them the kinds of resources available.

Teachers should also receive specific instruction on how to evaluate the resources. Teachers should be trained to continually evaluate them as to whether they fit the student-centered instructional models being advocated and whether or not they are aligned with local curriculum and performance standards (Green, 1998). Teachers need to learn that they can appreciate the bells and whistles of high technology resources – the animated graphics, the audio and video components, the built-in student assessment tools – but not let the entertainment value overwhelm the instructional value. In other words, a piece of software or a web site that is technically slick but instructionally unsound is worthless. Again, the motto is instruction first, technology second.

7. Inspire teachers to engage in telecollaborative projects via e-mail, the web, and video conferencing.

Probably the most exciting use of technology in classrooms these days has teachers and students communicating with each other across classrooms, schools, states and countries about topics of mutual interest. Students in the Rio Grande Valley collect data on the water quality of the river, share it electronically and engage in advocacy efforts to improve it. Students have contributed to the creation of a collaborative poem or story, sending it around the world for the next student to add a line or an event.

In the *Monster* project, students draw a monster, write a description about it and e-mail it to other students who then try to recreate the drawing from the description.

Thinkquest provides generous college scholarship prizes to teams of students and cash awards to their teachers and schools who create outstanding web sites for a math, science, social studies, health, language arts or multidisciplinary topics they have researched.

Middle school students in the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program meet annually in video conferences to brag about their cities and schools and to discuss the best ways to tutor their young elementary charges in reading and math (see López, 1999; Cantu and López-De La Garza, 1998). This activity serves multiple purposes, including building literacy skills.

Some telecollaborative projects bring in outside adults such as scientists and authors. The *Jason Project*, *Maya Quest*, and *Africa Quest* are three well-known projects in which classes learn about the investigations of oceanographers, anthropologists and archeologists as they occur under the ocean, in the Yucatan and in Africa. The possibilities for instructional and real world tie-ins are infinite and immensely captivating.

8. Team up teachers during and between workshops.

Invite two or more teachers to attend training as a team. Take advantage of natural liaisons, such as teachers from the same school who teach the same grade or subject or who serve on the same academic team. Another good kind of team includes campus technology coordinators together with classroom teachers. Or team up teachers across schools who agree to work together on a telecollaborative project or create multidisciplinary units together. Often at least one team member will have more technology expertise than the others and can serve as a team advisor or peer tutor during and after the workshops. The team members will also help inspire each other to actually apply methods and techniques once they return to the "real world" of the classroom.

9. Provide follow-up training support to teachers after workshops.

The most successful kind of follow-up support seems to be demonstration lessons in the classrooms of the trained teachers using the techniques taught in the workshops. Teachers can see exactly how the recommended approaches work with their own students and in their own classroom circumstances. This is the approach that has been used by IDRA for several schools implementing Project FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal), the Title VII Content Area Program Enhancement (CAPE) project, and the Houston North Central Independent School District (ISD) Onsite Technology Integration project. The elementary and secondary teachers involved in these projects have overwhelmingly indicated that the demonstration lessons were the most helpful training they received during the projects and often when compared to all the in-service training they had experienced during their teaching careers.

The drill-and-practice software that more teachers seem to prefer for instruction tends to be significantly more expensive than general productivity tool software, and it interests and motivates students significantly less.

Visits by trainers and supervisors to the classrooms of trained teachers can also be immensely helpful. Stopping by, preferably informally, to ask how things are going can motivate teachers to do more implementation and to ask assistance with obstacles such as a lack of a specific resource. E-mail and web-based networks between trainers and trainees can be established that allow participants to share the lessons they are learning and to obtain advice for problems they are experiencing. Online information resources such as sample lesson plans, frequently asked questions, and how-to directions for specific technology tools can provide 24-hour support to teachers seeking answers. The online *Teachers Internet Use Guide* developed by the STAR Center is one such example. (The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.)

10. Help schools assess their instructional technology programs, focusing the evaluation on issues of both excellence and equity.

Schools should periodically assess their programs regarding infrastructure, student usage of technology, and the provision of training and technical support to teachers. Several excellent formal ways to do so have been developed by a variety of universities and assistance centers. I would recommend the STAR Center's soon to be released technology planning guide and items from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (http://www.ncrtec.org): *Guiding Questions for Technology Planning*, *Learning with Technology Profile Tool*, and *Building the 21st Century School*.

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Bridging the Digital *- continued from page 13*

Less formally I recommend that school personnel ask themselves the following questions.

Infrastructure

- Where is hardware and other equipment located, and where is Internet access provided? In libraries, labs or classrooms? What kinds of classrooms?
- How good is the software used? Is it aligned with standards? Does it include productivity and reference tools? Is it linguistically and culturally appropriate?

Student Usage

- Which students have access to technology? Does it vary by race, ethnicity, gender or income level? Do students in special programs such as bilingual and gifted programs have equal access?
- Which kinds of student activities predominate? Drill-and-practice tutorial programs, product development, or problem solving? Do all students get to experience more creative uses of instructional technology?

Technical Support

- Who provides technical support?
- How long do teachers usually wait for it?
- Are they allowed or encouraged to do some things for themselves?

We have made significant progress in lessening the gap in terms of infrastructure, but helping teachers make productive uses of technology by more creatively using the hardware, software and Internet resources available to them is now urgently needed.

Teacher Training

- Who is trained? Those already knowledgeable about technology or those new to it? Regular program teachers or special program teachers? Individuals or teams?
- Does the training focus on technology integration?
- What follow-up support is provided?

The path to educational equity is a never-ending one, but one from which we as a nation cannot afford to stray. Lately, the forefront of attention has been in the area of technology equity, of efforts designed to end the digital divide in our schools. We have made significant progress in lessening the gap in terms of infrastructure, but helping teachers make productive uses of technology by more creatively using the hardware, software and Internet resources available to them is now urgently needed. We must provide them with adequate training and technical support and help them tailor innovative instructional technology approaches to the poor, minority and LEP students they teach.

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Bridging the Digital *- continued on page 15*

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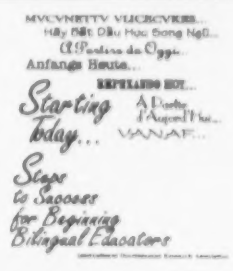

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HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT IDRA ACTIVITIES

In March, IDRA worked with **8,933** teachers, administrators and parents through **80** training and technical assistance activities and **206** program sites in **11** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- IDRA *Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program*
- Reading Success Network
- Community Engagement
- School Restructuring
- IDRA *WOW: Workshop on Workshops*

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Eagle Pass Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Texas Education Service Center, Region XVIII
- Chama Valley Public Schools, New Mexico
- Pulasky County Special School District, Arkansas

Activity Snapshot

During the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute, IDRA hosted a special full-day institute for parents to concentrate on the challenges of early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. More than 175 parents participated with a panel of experts on state policies, home and school curricula, and leadership development. They then worked together to develop a concrete plan of action for exerting leadership in early childhood education. The institute was co-sponsored by the IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas); *STAR Center* (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation); RE-CONNECT (the parent information and resource center that serves Texas); and Mobilization for Equity (a project funded by the Ford Foundation through the National Coalition of Advocates for Students to engage the public and parents).

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/444-1710.

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Tutors are provided with their own tutoring manual specifically developed for them, a name tag, and transportation to the elementary school when distance or weather is not appropriate for the tutors to walk. In essence, all the necessary support for the program's success must be agreed upon from its inception in order to guarantee that the students succeed.

Expectations

Nellie Bly wrote about the circumstances in an "insane asylum" back in the early 1900s when she was getting her start in journalism. She purposely had herself committed so that she could write about the place from experience. After 10 days, she was ready to leave and was released. When she wrote about the conditions, everyone was surely surprised and shocked at her findings. Although there was nothing wrong with her, Ms. Bly was treated as if she really were insane. There were many other people there who had nothing wrong with them, either. Many were recent immigrants who simply could not speak English. Others were just too different and did not fit in, so they were placed there.

When I graduated from high school and the university for my first, second and third degrees, I recalled all the negativism that I and many others had to overcome. Growing up with that self doubt and low self-esteem made learning more difficult.

When we empower students through respect and acknowledgment and valuing, we create energetic students who can do almost anything. The same thing happens when they see that they are being valued for something that they do well. Usually, the effects are immediate in the results of their work. If we are to help build the self-esteem of students, especially those who are considered at-risk today, perhaps we should start looking first at ourselves and what we are doing, then look at model programs that will help us do things better.

I will be forever grateful to my parents, my brothers and sisters who encouraged me and to all those teachers at all levels who did see my strengths and potential. Knowing what I know about myself and my heritage today, I know my prayers are answered.

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus:
Parents and Communities

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Valued Parent Leadership

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed. and Anna Alicia Romero

Inside this issue:

- Parents as advocates
- Project Alianza advances
- Models of parent involvement
- Take a field trip

All families are valuable; none is expendable. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) adapted this phrase from our very successful Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in which we model the paradigm of valuing. Our use of the word *valuing* is deliberate and pragmatic. We wish to champion and speak for the inclusive, nondiscriminatory and triumphalist idea that all families (particularly those who are economically disadvantaged, minority or speak a language other than English) are inherently good and worthy of being treated with respect, dignity and value.

IDRA's goal is bigger than parent *involvement* in education, rather it is parent *leadership*. This model is a vision of all parents as advocates of excellent neighborhood public schools. We consider leadership the culminating set of activities in a spectrum of parent participation. In this context, leadership is:

- inclusive,
- expanding,
- based on peer support and rotating responsibilities,
- ongoing invitation and support of new leadership,
- connecting parents and communities across race, ethnic and class divisions,
- focusing on collective action for the good of all children, and
- building relationships and trust that are essential to the process.

The characteristics we support in the development of leadership are in contrast to some traditional parent leadership models that emphasize individual assertiveness and charismatic advocacy. Our process supports parents in learning to work in groups, planning and carrying out activities, speaking in front of groups, and developing other personal skills and traits that develop the individual. But, our emphasis is on collective action, listening to peers, and revolving tasks and leadership roles.

IDRA Parent Involvement Model

IDRA's concept of the leadership role is part of a broader schema for parent involvement. Our underlying assumption (paradigm) is that of *valuing* as illustrated in facilitating parents to identify the strengths and assets in themselves and their peers. Key characteristics of the process include the following.

- Establish strong communication links and relationships among parents.
- Support and nurture networks with schools and community organizations.
- Recruit peers to participate and support emerging leaders to train other parents and community members to be leaders.
- Listen to peers by conducting focus groups with other parents.
- Reflect on activities, debrief, acknowledge successes, analyze actions, and integrate lessons learned into future plans.
- Provide contexts and opportunities for parents to be spokespersons and advocates.
- Learn to work in groups, including

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conducting meetings, listening to all ideas, resolving conflicts, making decisions, carrying out plans of action, and evaluating results.
- Support long-term relationships among participating families.
- Act on issues of current interest.
- Plan and carry out conferences *for parents by parents* on the topic of public education.

Comparison of Two Parent Involvement Typologies

Currently in the field of parent involvement, Joyce Epstein's "Six Types of Involvement" from *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* is the only major comprehensive model that is research-based. The perspective of the Epstein model is institutional. It works well to help schools look at a variety of ways to reach out to and involve families.

Epstein's six types of parent involvement are:
- parenting,
- communicating,
- volunteering,
- learning at home,
- decision-making, and
- collaborating with the community

The Epstein model sees each type of involvement as an area of responsibility that the school must carry out in a comprehensive and well-designed parent involvement program.

IDRA's goal is bigger than parent *involvement* in education, rather it is parent *leadership*. This model is a version of all parents as advocates of excellent neighborhood public schools.

The perspective of the IDRA model, on the other hand, is parent-centered (Montemayor, 1997). IDRA's four types of parent involvement are:
- parents as teachers,
- parents as resources,
- parents as decision-makers, and
- parents as leaders and trainers.

The IDRA model differs from the Epstein model in significant ways. For example, "parenting" and "learning at home" are part of IDRA's first step, "parents as teachers." "Communicating" permeates all four steps in the IDRA model. "Volunteering" is a part of IDRA's "parents as resources" step. "Collaborating with the community" is part of IDRA's "parents as resources" and "parents as leaders and trainers" steps.

In the IDRA model, *valuing* and *assets acknowledgment* undergird each step of participation. We see the parent as teacher, first of all. This validates and acknowledges all the parent already is, has done and will continue to do with his or her child: as parent, teacher, communicator, supporter, role-model, values transmitter, etc.

This is typically the area of greatest interest to most parents who are not actively engaged with their child's school. Research shows that the effects of parent influence are greatest in reading: If the family reads, the child will read. Similar research findings exist for amount of time spent watching television and school attendance.

The next level in the IDRA parent model is a further opportunity to validate and give respect to the parent as an experienced, capable, thinking and complex being. We support parents to be and be seen as rich resources in language, culture, history, empathy and many other possibilities to the school beyond simply volunteering to do chores and providing money and snacks to the school.

In the third level, parents as decision-makers, IDRA supports and encourages parents to participate in all aspects of the school process. They should be recognized as full partners in planning, curriculum and instruction. This does not mean asking professionals to abdicate their responsibilities but finding means of integrating parent points of view and experiences into all aspects of running the

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In This Issue...

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7 Project Alianza – Second Year Milestone

9 Internet Web Sites on Parents & Communities

13 Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, ©2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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Parents Are the Best Advocates

Anna Alicia Romero

Over a decade of national conversations about education reform have led to a variety of approaches to teaching, school management, reallocation of resources, and other issues regarding education. In some instances, the sense of urgency for education reform and the haste to see rapid results have led to reactionary ideas that, in the long run, will only exacerbate inequities in our public schools.

California's Proposition 227, also known as the Unz Initiative, is one such idea. Based on anecdotal stories and an anti-immigrant agenda and fueled by the corporate dollars of a few people (especially from people living in other states), the proposition fed on that impatience. This proposition effectively eliminates bilingual education and attempts to require all children to learn English in their first year of school. It was passed in June of 1998, largely based on misinformation about the effectiveness and appropriateness of good bilingual education programs and the students they serve.

Dr. Maria "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director, made the following statement in response:

> It makes sense to teach children in a language they understand. It also makes sense to teach them English. Volumes of data have documented that a well-designed, well-implemented bilingual education program is the most effective way to teach English to children who speak another language while also teaching core subjects like math, social studies and science (1998).

Still, many students in California are not being taught in a language they understand. And the threat to appropriate bilingual services through the initiative and referendum process may not be contained to California. Similar measures in Arizona and Colorado may be placed on statewide ballots this fall.

In analyzing the U.S. system of public education and the role of equity, IDRA founder and director emeritus Dr. José A. Cárdenas referred to the public school system as being incompatible with the minority students it serves:

> The dismal failure of American schools in the education of minority groups can be attributed to the incompatibilities that exist between the characteristics of the target minority population and the characteristics of an instructional program developed for a White, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, middle-class oriented population. Incompatibilities exist in economic level, mobility, and societal perceptions, but perhaps the most glaring incompatibilities exist in the areas of culture, including language (1995).

Taken a step further, one can plainly see how Cárdenas' assertion is true in parents' access to the traditional system of education and how that system views the rights of minority parents to have a voice in their children's education.

The best way for us to arrive at *constructive* solutions where all children will benefit is through collective action. Dr. Robledo Montecel continued, "[Proposition 227] is a wake up call for minority parents, educators and concerned citizens to assert themselves, be pro-active and make schools more accountable for the appropriate education of all children" (1998).

The mobilization of an informed parent network advocating excellent bilingual programs in our public schools will be key to ensuring that equity in our schools is championed and preserved. During the past five years, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) has focused attention to nurturing parent leadership, especially with language-minority families and those who are economically-disadvantaged.

Parents Are - continued on page 4

Did You Know?

Too many of today's teachers in our nation's public school system are not formally trained in the classes they are now teaching. In addition, over the next decade, 2.2 million new teachers will be needed to replace retiring teachers and those leaving the teaching profession as well as to accommodate population increases and the movement to reduce class-size.

Students at public schools in poor communities were more likely than their wealthier counterparts to be taught core subjects by a teacher who had not majored in that subject matter.

Seventy percent of seventh through 12th graders in high poverty schools (both inner city and rural) were recently taught physical science by unqualified teachers.

– Children's Defense Fund, 2000 (www.childrendefense.org)

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

Parents Are - continued from page 3

The basic tenet of our work with children and families is that all are valuable, none is expendable.

The model of working with parents to plan parent conferences has served as a laboratory for leadership and has given us the opportunity to connect with parents throughout San Antonio's 14 school districts and from around Texas (see "Valued Parent Leadership"). Often addressing equity issues such as access to quality bilingual programs, these education conferences have also led to the creation of a network of parent leaders.

The seed for a national network of parents to advocate quality bilingual programs was planted at the annual conference of the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) in 1999 (Montemayor, 1999). We moved forward in strengthening the concept of a parent coalition for bilingual education at the NABE conference in 2000.

NABE 2000 Parent Institute

The NABE 2000 conference involved more than 8,000 bilingual educators, researchers and advocates. Running concurrently with the general conference, was a parent institute. Parents from the San Antonio area representing six school districts helped organize the event. From beginning to end, parents had a hand in preparing and executing the institute.

More than 150 parents and educators attended the two-day institute. They came from Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin. Each participant received a packet of information that contained useful articles on bilingual education, dual language programs and parent leadership in education and information on the formation of a parent advocacy group, Parent Coalition for Bilingual Education.

There were three objectives for the institute:

- Model parent leadership in education.
- Learn more about leadership and bilingual education.
- Dialogue with parents and community members seeking solutions to educational and social problems.

The framework for the institute was to have general presentations of no longer than 30 minutes each followed by small group dialogues facilitated by parents. Activities included the following:

- A presentation on the importance of quality dual language and bilingual programs and validating the home language,
- A panel of parents discussing the role of parents in identifying quality bilingual programs, becoming part of the classroom, and becoming advocates and community organizers for quality bilingual programs,
- The economic impact of a bilingual workforce,
- A panel of four teenagers, and
- A presentation on advocacy of bilingual education.

Each group had its own recorder and a person appointed who shared a summary of the discussion with the larger group.

As advocates and educators, we must be unwavering on our stance for quality language programs. We must also actively support the nurturing and flourishing of parent leadership.

Modeling Parent Leadership

Participants observed parents taking on various leadership roles, such as the master of ceremonies, facilitators, presenters, and organizers. Both days were facilitated by family stakeholders in education who were also involved in the overall planning of the institute. On the first day, two mothers from San Antonio facilitated the majority of the activities, and the final portion of the day was facilitated by two IDRA parent liaisons who have children in public schools. The second day was facilitated by a grandmother of children in public school and a father of school-age children.

A clear example of parents modeling leadership was the panel of parents who spoke on the various forms of parent leadership. One parent spoke about parents being resources to the school and identifying effective bilingual programs. Another panelist spoke about the rights of parents to participate in the public school system. The final panelist described her advocacy of quality dual language programs in her child's elementary school. She described her collaboration with the school district and other parents in her district to extend the dual language program to the middle school level.

Facilitators modeled an important leadership skill: listening. They were trained to ask key questions and move the discussion along without making judgements on the opinions being expressed and by treating the group with respect.

Every general presentation at the institute addressed the importance of being bilingual, and even multilingual, from a variety of perspectives. Some participants spoke of bilingualism from the standpoint of cultural pride and awareness. Others saw bilingualism as a necessity for the increasingly global workforce. One speaker addressed the issue of equity in our public schools and the need to value all students and their families, regardless of their home language or English proficiency.

Parents and Community Members Seeking Solutions through Dialogue

After each general presentation, parents were randomly placed in small groups where they focused on three questions:

- What points made by the speaker were most interesting or important to you?
  ¿Cuales puntos hechos por la conferencista fueron los mas interesantes o importantes para usted?
- What did you learn?
  ¿Que aprendió?
- What action should we take as a result of these ideas?
  ¿Que acción se debe de tomar como resultado de estas ideas?

The dialogue among participants is very important for several reasons. It allows them to process the information they received, and it gives parents a forum they seldom have to voice their opinions about bilingual education and leadership among their peers and educators, especially when an environment of safety has been created by the facilitator and the group. The dialogue allows educators to listen to parents' points of view and vice versa. It also allows parents an opportunity to organize like-minded individuals in the group to take action.

During the event, one person in each small group was selected to take notes, and another individual was chosen to give the group report to the larger audience. Public speaking is a difficult skill for many people to acquire. So having parents act as group reporters allowed them, especially the quiet ones, to experience presenting before a large group with the hope that it becomes a less intimidating activity each time.

Each day culminated with a plan of action that came from the different small

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groups. To make the transition to taking action for quality bilingual programs, participants were asked to reflect on their connections at the community, state and national levels; to explain how they were going to mobilize people for excellent bilingual programs; and to set a goal date for these actions to occur.

The NABE 2000 parent institute provided a forum where parents could speak to one another about their concerns with bilingual programs and their vision of children's future with bilingual programs. It was a chance for educators to listen to the experiences of parents who have been assertively defending their children's right to have access to and receive a quality bilingual or dual language program. As peers in a setting where all points of view are valued, educators were able to listen to parents' concerns about education, what their expectations are for their children's learning and how that learning will impact their children's future.

The policies that exist for bilingual education today in 49 states did not emerge spontaneously. And it was not the educators who raised the red flag on the inequalities for students whose native language was other than English. The Chinese families who brought forth the *Lau vs. Nichols* case (in California in 1973) argued that their children did not have equitable opportunity to learn when taught in a language they did not understand (English). Thus, they were denied an opportunity to achieve at high levels. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed, stating that schools must provide appropriate language services to their students.

Twenty-seven years later, the struggle for equity in the education of language-minority students remains. The passage of Proposition 227 in the very state where the *Lau* case originated and the threat of other Unz-like initiatives is an attempt to dismantle the rights children saw validated under *Lau*. The initiatives that are cropping up in other states will deny equitable treatment, access and inclusion to language-minority children who will be placed in classrooms where they are immersed in English-only environments that blatantly devalue their language, their culture and their identity. These are environments that hinder learning.

Parents Mobilizing for Equity and a Call for Institutional Support

If those who are culturally and politically disenfranchised are to make headway in the emerging economy, they must hold fast to their cultural and linguistic identity. Without a doubt, challenges exist for any group of parents organizing to ensure that schools are being inclusive of all children and families and to holding schools accountable. Much resistance will come from the institution being pressured to change and from parents themselves. Political support for equity for language-minority children is threatened as a wave of anti-bilingual policies are being introduced and passed in state legislatures and in Congress.

As advocates and educators, we must be unwavering on our stance for quality language programs. We must also actively support the nurturing and flourishing of parent leadership. Recognizing families as valuable partners in education and in our future as a society will keep us from being vulnerable to those who attack our children's right to have a quality education.

A mobilized community takes on a life of its own, it does not waiver, it seeks truth and it keeps pressuring for the good of everyone in the community. We must mobilize to reclaim our schools and make them work for all children. It is possible.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A. *Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy* (Needham Heights, Mass.: Simon & Schuster Publishing Custom Publishing, 1995).

Montemayor, A.M. "Parents Organizing Bilingual Education Advocates: Parent Institutes as a Strategy," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, May 1999).

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Bridging the Gap between Schools and Families: A Family Friendly Approach

Anita M. Foxworth, Ph.D.

Thirty years of research demonstrates that there is a strong link between parental involvement and increased academic achievement. Henderson and Berla state:

> The evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed, not just in school but throughout life. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to: (1) Create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and (3) Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community (1995).

In addition to the strong research base supporting the importance of family involvement, national legislation and state requirements emphasizes the need for schools to involve parents in their children's education. Several policies are noteworthy in sounding the call for parental involvement in schools. These include Goals 2000, the *Improving America's Schools Act*, Texas Senate Bill 1 and, more recently, Texas legislation that requires that parental involvement be addressed in campus improvement plans.

Despite the research and national and state attention to the issue, family involvement in children's learning remains a challenge both for schools and families. Families often feel unwelcome in schools. Keith Geiger, NEA president in 1994, substantiates this idea when he says, "The sad fact is that many parents do not feel that we welcome them in school." A recent survey by the National PTA indicated that many parents still feel that their involvement is not welcome at the school.

Schools of today also encounter challenges in meaningfully involving poor and minority parents. L.B. Liontos stated that more than one teacher has complained: "'I never see the parents that I need to see.' These are the parents of children at risk of failing, of dropping out, of having what in today's world amounts to no future at all" (1991).

These two worlds – that of not feeling welcome and that of "we are doing everything we can, but parents don't care" – seem very much opposed to each other. How do we bridge that gap?

In its training materials on *Creating Family Friendly Schools*, the STAR Center chose to address both the issues of parents not feeling welcome in school and the difficulties of creating meaningful opportunities for parents in high poverty schools to participate in school activities. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation. Its *Creating Family Friendly Schools* training offers 12 modules that address topics that give educators tools to build partnerships with parents and communities.

The STAR Center began its process in 1997 by conducting a meeting with parent involvement specialists from around the state. Staff facilitated discussion through a needs assessment process that resulted in the identification of the topics with which district and campus level staff most needed help. STAR Center staff combined all of the items identified as needs into the category of creating family friendly schools.

Next, STAR Center staff developed the training modules and field-tested them in several education service center regions and school districts throughout the state. The training and the training materials were very well received. Participants taught them much about the willingness of schools to involve parents, dispelling the notions that a lot of schools just do not want parents involved. Joyce Epstein states, "Most schools want to involve parents but they don't know how" (1995).

STAR Center staff not only gave schools the "how" but also emphasized the importance of family involvement through sharing of critical research, practical experiences, and the use of techniques like dialogue and reflection.

Here are comments from some of our participants:

- "Today I learned, we can do this! (And we will!)"
- "Today I learned that families are essential to our children's learning experience."
- "Awesome!"
- "I needed this to get my enthusiasm going."
- "I've learned different ways to help our families succeed."
- "There is a lot of material with ideas that can be put to use!"
- "Good ideas I've never even thought about. Really, I've been kind of scared of parent contact."
- "I'm ready to go back and really do something positive. This is a great workshop!"

The STAR Center's training in *Creating Family Friendly Schools* offers a way for schools to strengthen their partnerships with families and communities. When schools, families and communities work together, they help students succeed in school and in life.

Resources

Epstein, J.L. "School-Family-Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share." *Phi Delta Kappan* (1995) 76, 702.

Henderson, A.T., and Berla, N. *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Education, 1995).

Geiger, K. *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1994) 13.

Liontos, L.B. "Involving At-risk Families in their Children's Education," *ERIC Digest* (1991) Number EA 58 ED326925.

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Project Alianza – Second Year Milestone

Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

In March, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley addressed the future of Hispanic education in a speech at Bell Multicultural Senior High School in Washington, D.C. In his speech, "*Excelencia Para Todos* – Excellence for All: The Progress of Hispanic Education and the Challenges of a New Century," Secretary Riley spoke of the assets of diversity and multiple languages. He challenged the nation to increase the number of dual language schools to at least 1,000 over the next five years. In that time, Hispanics will make up the largest U.S. minority group. By 2050, one out of every four men, women and children in our country will be Hispanic.

The importance of this call to action is the underlying premise that native languages and cultures are assets, not deficiencies, and that English language learners should not have to give up their language or their culture as the price they pay for learning English. The inherent value of all students and their characteristics must be recognized, acknowledged and celebrated. When limited-English-proficient (LEP) students walk into a classroom in this country, they should not be limited in their access to an equitable and excellent education. For that to occur, teachers must be prepared to serve them.

Currently, there are about 3.5 million LEP students in the United States. Fifty-four percent of U.S. teachers have LEP students in their classrooms, but only one-fifth of teachers are, in fact, prepared to serve them. Diaz-Rico and Smith report that between 100,000 to 200,000 bilingual teachers are needed today in U.S. classrooms (1994).

Project Alianza lives against this backdrop – of recognizing and capitalizing on the strengths and assets that English language learners bring. IDRA created this five-year project with funding by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Project Alianza (Alliance) began with the goal of developing teacher preparation and leadership development programs to increase the number of teachers prepared to teach English in bilingual and multicultural environments.

When limited-English-proficient (LEP) students walk into a classroom in this country, they should not be limited in their access to an equitable and excellent education. For that to occur, teachers must be prepared to serve them.

Project Alianza is an alliance of organizations – the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation, the University of Texas at San Antonio, California State University at Long Beach, the University of Texas-Pan American, Southwest Texas State University, and Arizona State University – committed and dedicated to achieving this goal. A new satellite university, the University of Texas at El Paso joined the alliance this year. Three other satellite universities will join the project in the third year. They are Texas A&M International in Laredo, Texas; Texas Women's University in Denton, Texas; and California State University in San Bernardino, California.

Now in its second year, Project Alianza's evaluation shows that significant milestones have been reached both in the numbers of teachers being prepared for English instruction in bilingual and multicultural environments and in the changes in institutions. In addition to its other roles, IDRA is working with Views Unlimited, Inc. (Dr. Manuel Piña, principal investigator, Texas A&M University) to serve as external evaluator for Project Alianza. Dr. Piña contributes to the primary purposes of this evaluation by focusing on the institutional changes that occur as a result of this effort.

Principles of Collaboration

The project's significant milestones are not possible without an alliance guided by principles of collaboration which include the following:

- Alianza universities will have **diversity** and reflect specialized and generic knowledge about the education of students and the preparation of teachers.
- Alianza universities will have **trust** because partnership is based on confidence and faith in each other. Candor and willingness to work through issues will be standard operating procedures.
- Alianza universities will be represented with **binationality**. The partnership represents a binational effort and consistently draws on the assets of the two nations.
- Alianza partnerships will have **expediency** and **minimal bureaucracy**. Governance and execution of tasks are not hampered by organizational and structural red-tape.
- Alianza partnerships will have **speed** and **movement** is quick and decisive and transforms barriers into opportunities.
- Alianza partnerships will have **accuracy**, **quality** and **excellence** with timely results are stressed.
- Alianza universities are in **partnership**. We are jointly committed to the success of the process we are in.

Alianza partnerships are based on empowerment, a collaboration in which all partners have a major role in a major function in the project and have access to other partners for the planning and delivery of project services.

Project Alianza's second year objectives were organized around the following five areas of focus: teacher preparation, leadership in diversity, dissemination of innovations, bi-national collaborations, and institutional changes and relationships. Major findings under

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each area of focus are being discovered every day of Alianza.

Reflecting and acting on lessons learned from project experiences and the major findings are at the core of this project. Our reflection provides opportunities for us to acknowledge the change that has already been created and to celebrate when we have been the catalysts for creating and institutionalizing changes that have a lasting impact on the way universities and communities interact for the welfare of all students, particularly those students who do not enjoy full access to the educational opportunities in this country. These lessons learned and the ensuing challenges provide insights on what we experienced. These insights are shared with colleagues and the global community. We are also cognizant of our responsibility to ensure that these lessons become part of our common knowledge and experience in addressing the needs of Latino youth in our educational systems.

Future plans are based on the original Project Alianza commitment and the lessons learned during this second year. This article discusses the four phases of Alianza's second year: goals, major findings, lessons learned and future plans.

Preparing Bilingual Teachers

The overarching goal for Alianza's second year was to increase the number of bilingual teachers by enabling the certification of teachers (teacher aides and regular students from the United States and *normalista* teachers trained in Mexico). Alianza universities selected and enrolled the second cohort of 10 students each in a bilingual education and teacher preparation program. They also sponsored intensive language programs for *nomalistas* learning English and an intensive Spanish-language program for other bilingual education institutions. The universities established a mentoring program where *normalistas* and other bilingual education students learn from each other.

The enthusiasm for this project cannot be overstated. California State University at Long Beach had more than 300 applicants for the 10 available slots. The applicants often have excellent credentials. One woman at the University of Texas at El Paso was employed as a medical secretary. Her *normalista* curriculum was so impressive that she was given 60 hours of university credit.

Southwest Texas State University graduated the first Alianza *normalista* who is now teaching in the Austin Independent School District (ISD). The university also has the first Alianza teacher aide graduating this year. She credits the project with helping her realize her dream of becoming a teacher. She is graduating *summa cum laude* with a 3.8 grade point average.

Project Alianza universities sponsored intensive language programs. *Normalistas* were enrolled in an intensive English-language program while traditional students were enrolled in a Spanish language enrichment program.

The universities also established mentoring programs for participating students. The University of Texas-Pan American is providing ExCET sessions in English for all Alianza students from March to August 2000. Students also had the opportunity to attend English as a second language (ESL) seminars this spring, all in an effort to support their students' success in English language proficiency.

The lessons learned so far include the imperative that instructors be carefully selected to meet the needs and characteristics of the students (e.g., English instructors with Spanish oral and written proficiency). Participants also found that students benefit from instructors who coordinate assignments.

Financial support can vary, with traditional students being able to access existing "traditional" financial aid resources while non-traditional students are in greater need of W.K. Kellogg Foundation stipend funding.

The bulk of the major findings focused on the academic success of the Alianza students follow.

- Full proficiency in both Spanish and English (knowledge, skills and conversational fluidity) are vital for teachers and students in Project Alianza.
- Support in preparing students to pass exit exams (such as the California Basic Education Skills test) is critical.
- Support is crucial to ensure a high level of proficiency in mathematics.
- Diversity (*normalistas*, teacher aides, other students) represents a valuable resource to each other in learning a second language and sharing teaching and learning experiences.

Many of the future plans for teacher preparation will continue along the same lines of the first and second year plans.

- Alianza universities will continue to recruit the third cohort of 10 paraprofessionals to the program.
- Alianza universities will continue to work with *normalistas*.
- Alianza universities will provide intensive English-language training to *normalistas* and Spanish-language training to regular bilingual education students.
- Alianza universities will continue a mentoring program between *normalistas* and other bilingual education students and provide specialized counseling.

Supporting Leadership in Diversity

The main goal of Alianza's Leadership in Diversity innovation is to promote the contextual understanding and interaction among parents, communities, schools, colleges and universities, and policy-makers in an effort to create more meaningful learning opportunities for Latino students. Each Alianza university is establishing a committee of school people, community leaders, parents, students and university personnel to provide guidance to the university in designing changes and in monitoring the implementation of the changes during the five-year grant period.

The universities also have sponsored a series of highly interactive sessions for these committee members to share information and outcomes of the project and to promote the creation of opportunities for diversity at all levels of the educational system – creating a seamless kindergarten through grade 16 (K-16) system.

Each Leadership in Diversity committee is addressing the following objectives:

- reaching out to school districts;
- integrating parents into the committees; and
- working collaboratively with university instructors, students, teachers and parents in school district communities to develop an assets-based model.

Four main lessons were learned in the second year of Project Alianza. First, there must be a clear vision and plan of community leaders' roles *prior* to their involvement in a committee. Second, committee leaders must be involved at every level of the K-16 pipeline. Third, opportunities must be created for involving students in such committees, drawing upon their wisdom and insights. This, in turn, leads to more effective student leadership programs. Fourth, the Leadership

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in Diversity committee can be an excellent forum for parents to provide information about their expectations and their beliefs about what the university can provide and about their role as parents.

Alianza universities will continue to support their Leadership in Diversity committees. IDRA will continue to provide technical assistance to universities in implementing these committees.

Disseminating Innovations

There are two goals for Alianza in the area of dissemination of innovations. One goal is to conduct research that will inform the university community on reform efforts at the university level. The second goal is to disseminate research findings to the university communities, surrounding communities and policy-makers. In year two, Project Alianza conducted research on the implementation of a model teacher preparation program designed to serve LEP students.

The three hub universities and Arizona State University are conducting and disseminating research. Arizona State University completed research during Alianza's first year designed to support universities in their reform efforts for admitting and preparing bilingual education students. The studies were disseminated during the second program year. They covered the following topics (see "Project Alianza Research Publications Available," *IDRA Newsletter*, April 2000).

- *Spanish Language Proficiency of Bilingual Education Teachers*
  The research addresses a teacher's level of competency in the home language of students and how competencies should be developed and measured.
- *Certification and Endorsement of Bilingual Education Teachers: A Comparison of State Licensure Requirements*
  The research reveals how *normal* preparation in Mexico compares to teacher education in the United States and the different eras of change in the *normal* curriculum in the last 20 years.
- *Mexican Normalista Teachers as a Resource for Bilingual Education in the United States: Connecting Two Models of Teacher Preparation*
  The research discusses the commonalities of practice and competencies.

The Center for Bilingual Education and Research at Arizona State University has been conducting two research studies this year. The first is a comparison of curricular standards and objectives in mathematics and language arts (grades one to three) in Mexico and the United States. The second is a study of the attitudes and beliefs of Alianza participating students.

The University of Texas at San Antonio is conducting research on the implementation of a model teacher preparation program designed to serve LEP students.

The University of Texas-Pan American is conducting research on biliteracy development through a dual language teacher preparation program, positive outcomes of bilingual mentoring relationships, and a dual language model's impact on the ExCET.

Southwest Texas State University is authoring three research articles: "Reciprocal Learning in Bilingual University Settings," "Effective Practices in Mexico and the United States," and "Literacy Development in Mexico and the United States." Plans for dissemination include submission to scholarly journals 2000-01. The university also plans research on the reflections of a *normalista* (the first Project Alianza graduate) who was recently hired

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Internet Web Sites on Parents and Communities

Family Literacy and Homework Help

Funbrain: Educational Kids Games www.funbrain.com/index.html
Kid Info - School Subjects www.kidinfo.com/School_Subjects.html
Helping Your Child Learn to Read www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reading/index.html
Kids Korner - Educational and Fun Links www.webflare.com/adtopia/kids.htm
National Center for Family Literacy www.famlit.org
Parents and Children Reading Together Online
www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/fl/pcto/menu.html

Parenting and Parental Involvement

Baby Web: Pregnancy, Birth and Babies www.netaxs.com/~iris/infoweb/baby.html
Brief Articles for Latino Parents www.ael.org/eric/sosa.htm
Children Now www.childrennow.org
Children, Youth and Families Education and Research Network www.cyfernet.org
Early Childhood Educators and Family Web Corner
www.nauticom.net/www/cokids/index.html
Education Week's Town Meeting www.edweek.org/context/meeting
Family Education Network www.familyeducation.com
How Schools Can Support Family Involvement www.ed.gov/PFIE/schools.html
Infosel - Internet Familia comunidades.infosel.com/internetfamilia
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
Kids Can Learn www.kidscanlearn.com
KidsHealth www.kidshealth.org
KidSource www.kidsource.com
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children www.missingkids.com
National Parent Information Network www.npin.org
Parent Soup www.parentsoup.com
Positive Parenting Magazine www.positiveparenting.com
South Central Collaborative for Equity (at IDRA) www.idra.org/scce
Smart Parents' Guide to Kids' TV www.kqed.org/cell/chen/miltonmenu.html

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

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as a full-time bilingual education teacher in the Austin ISD in Texas.

California State University at Long Beach is conducting two research studies. One will study the attitudes of *Alianzistas* students compared with U.S.-born students. The second study will look at the high volume of applicants to Alianza and how the university is or is not addressing the issues of access to teacher preparation programs in a time of dramatic teacher shortages.

In addition to the university research, Dr. Maria Quezada (former California State University Long Beach Alianza director) published an article entitled "Project Alianza: A Model Teacher Preparation and Leadership Development Program Reaches Out to Traditionally Underserved Linguistic Minority Candidates" in *Multicultural Education*, a publication by the California Association for Bilingual Education.

The universities will continue to document the lessons learned and disseminate their research and lessons to institutions across the country. Project Alianza will also disseminate key research findings at a networking conference this fall for ENLACE, another W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded effort.

During the third year, Project Alianza will host a networking conference for K-12 bilingual education directors and university faculty who are key to teacher preparation programs for bilingual education.

Collaborating Bi-nationally

The main goal for binational collaboration is to establish ties between U.S. and Mexico universities, enabling professor and student exchanges, collaborative research, and shared curriculum development. During the second year, the Alianza universities began the process of identifying sister institutions in Mexico:

- California State University at Long Beach has identified the *Escuela Normal Estatal de Ensenada* in Baja, California.
- The University of Texas at San Antonio identified *Benemerita Escuela Normal de Coahuila*.
- The University of Texas at El Paso identified *Escuela Normal Federal "Miguel Hidalgo,"*
- Southwest Texas State University identified *Escuela Normal "ProPr. Serafin Pena,"* and
- The University of Texas-Pan American identified *Benemerita Escuela Normal Federalizada de Tamaulipas*.

A key learning was that normalistas often helped the less experienced students and acted as culture brokers for the "traditional" students. This created excellent opportunities for mentoring and a deeper understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds.

Alianza universities are participating in a one-week institute for students, designed by the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation to promote better understanding and knowledge of immigrant students and their educational needs. The institute will also explore Alianza students' educational experiences in Mexico and share the Mexican experience in pedagogy with second language learners.

A senior fellows seminar on Mexico was conducted by the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation in June 1999. The seminar provided a broad, diverse and insightful vision of the economical, political, educational, social and cultural aspects of today's Mexico. Participants included IDRA staff, Project Alianza coordinators, university faculty and two U.S. Department of Education program officers. Participants reported that the dynamic exchange enhanced the sensitivity, the understanding and the compassion of those involved in the preparation of teachers who work with children of Latino or Mexican background in the United States. Another one-week institute was held this May in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, with participation by five students and university staff and faculty from each hub university.

The Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation has also made important linkages with the Department of Education in Mexico, actively engaging it with Project Alianza and resulting in the department's support of the project, particularly with bi-national accreditation issues.

A key learning was that *normalistas* often helped the less experienced students and acted as culture brokers for the "traditional" students. This created excellent opportunities for mentoring and a deeper understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds.

Also, the institute in Mexico provided a unique experience for students to learn, at a profound level, the intricacies and richness of the educational system in Mexico. These insights and lessons were learned in a way that can be applied when these students become teachers, enriching their public school students.

Alianza students will participate in a one-week institute developed by the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation to promote a better understanding and knowledge of immigrant students and their educational experience in Mexico. This school-based institute will provide in-depth, first-hand looks at another system, values, beliefs and behaviors.

Changing Institutions and Building Relationships

Alianza's goal for institutional changes and relationships is twofold. One part is to promote institutional changes that improve the access and quality of teacher preparation programs. The second part is to promote institutional changes that enhance pedagogical and leadership abilities.

Alianza universities are assisting IDRA in creating a change process that communities and universities can use to contextualize and enhance their bilingual education and ESL teacher preparation programs and outreach strategies. The universities are collecting data on changes being implemented as a result of the technical assistance received by the satellite and partner institutions. A mentorship program with one satellite institution will be established by each Alianza university.

These objectives are being accomplished throughout the life of the project by developing, field-testing, and disseminating comprehensive, pluralistic, and integrated models. These models will prepare communities and educators to respond to the increasing diversity of student populations in schools (kindergarten to 16) and to exercise leadership in doing so.

Good working relationships have

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been established through the different institutions. It is these relationships that form the basis for collaboration, increased understanding and flexibility. For example, through the project director's efforts at Southwest Texas State University, non-bilingual instructors are now aware of and sensitive to the second language needs of Project Alianza students. This sensitivity extends to the university's Office of Teacher Certification, the Dean of the College of Education and the Dean of Graduate Studies – all of whom support Project Alianza students – who often are accommodating their scheduling needs. Again, thanks to the project director, ESL instructors at the university look to the Project Alianza students for assistance, thereby enhancing the students' leadership skills.

At the University of Texas at San Antonio, the project director and staff have made important linkages with K-12 schools and have created opportunities for *normalista* students to meet with school principals and teachers during their student teacher placement in the schools. This is an important linkage for future employment. School placement is now coordinated between the university and the schools. Another linkage is between university students who are also parents of area school children. Their participation in school district activities is encouraged, and they gain important insights from their roles as parents *and* students.

Thus, many lessons have been learned in the area of institutional change and relationships.

- The project identifies ways to revalidate course work completed in Mexico as part of the *Normalista* teacher preparation program.
- Once a revalidation process for *normalistas* is established, it facilitates revalidation of previous coursework for Central American and South American participants of the project.
- Courses must be offered on the weekend (requiring institutional flexibility) to address the specific needs of some students.
- Strong support from the higher echelons of the institution greatly enhances and facilitates faculty and university support for the project, including deans from the various colleges involved in course scheduling for project courses
- Networking with key personnel from different university departments is important to ensure the best interests of the project students are served.
- Project Alianza *is* changing the mindsets of university staff and faculty to see the community not from a "needs" perspective but from a "contributing" one. This requires numerous and consistent conversations with key stakeholders and a major shift that recognizes and acknowledges that everyone contributes valuable assets and strengths.

The universities will continue to positively impact relationships among key stakeholders, so they, too, share in the success of students.

Project Alianza continues to make extraordinary advances, enrolling many more students than originally anticipated, garnering institutional support, leveraging resources, and creating and strengthening relationships among individuals and institutions. These advances are a testament to the dedication and commitment of Project Alianza's leadership.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned thus far is that all institutions are comprised of individuals. And when an extraordinary group of individuals in those institutions come together to create change, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Institutional practices and procedures improve, having an extraordinary impact on all.

Resources

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Valued Parent - continued from page 2
school.

The decision-making effort, which is a strong move in the direction of leadership, has been documented, and training materials are available. Though not as common or as widespread as the materials for parents as teachers and parents as resources to schools, there is a body of literature that supports developing parents as decision-makers on committees and boards. The research identifies skills needed to work effectively in groups.

The fourth level of IDRA's model of parent participation, the focus of this article, is parents as leaders. In our definition and experience, this kind of leader is one who listens deeply to his or her peers, who accepts responsibility for advocating the rights of all children, who is assertive but also accepts rotating responsibility, who values collective action more than personal recognition, and who trains other parents to be leaders.

The method that the IDRA model emphasizes goes beyond most schema for parent involvement and has been the least documented and researched outside of IDRA. Yet the need for this kind of leadership is great.

Laboratories for Leadership Development

In 1995, IDRA launched a focused and sustained effort to carry out our parent involvement model, with strong focus on the leadership level. With the support of the Ford Foundation through its national Mobilization for Equity, IDRA established a pattern of community conferences that served as training laboratories for leadership.

The challenge accepted by the participating parents was to plan and carry out an educational conference *for* parents *by* parents. The constants in the process were dialoguing as peers, mutual listening, reporting to large groups, connecting conversation to action, and refining through reflection.

A key element in each conference has been that each major speaker is given time for his or her presentation followed by small group discussions and reports from the small groups. The small group discussions are critical in allowing all participants to voice what the main points were for them, what they learned, and implications for their action. By having a report from each group, the discussions are given further validation, and the number of individuals presenting before the large group is increased significantly.

The parents play many roles in the process. All of them are part of the planning. They assist with registration and welcoming guests, they provide the breakfast snacks, they usher and organize the seating arrangements, they emcee, they present, they facilitate, they report, they network and form new connections, they encourage feedback and gather evaluations, and they debrief and reflect together. Each conference enabled all aspects of the planning, carrying out and evaluating to be a learning experience for the parents and families involved.

Initially, four of the events were local conferences held in San Antonio, independent of any other organization or group. A loose knit group of parents and others in the community was formed. The group members called themselves FUEGO (Families United for Education: Getting Organized [*Familias unidas para la educación: ganando organizadas*]) (Romero, 1997).

In addition, a small group of parents in Boerne, near San Antonio, held its own local conference with support from FUEGO parents. A group from Project ARISE, based in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and mostly from unincorporated communities called *colonias*, attended the Boerne conference. They have recently held their own conference, which included discussions on education issues. A group in El Paso, *Bienestar Familiar*, has also recently held its own education conference with the guidance and support of IDRA staff.

Parallel to these events, IDRA has assisted with parent institutes held as part of state and national organization events (Montemayor, 1999). In 1998 and 1999, FUEGO parents planned, carried out and evaluated two parent institutes held in San Antonio and Corpus Christi for the Texas Association for Bilingual Education. In 1998, FUEGO parents helped plan and carry out a parent institute for the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) convention held in Dallas. In 1999, assistance was given to the parent portion of the NABE convention in Denver. This past February, the San Antonio parents planned, hosted and carried out the parent institute for the NABE national convention held in San Antonio.

As part of the Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute, a parent institute was held with more than 150 parents participating. This reflected the results of a new outreach effort being piloted by IDRA. Parents and some educators from San Antonio and other Texas sites participated in bilingual (Spanish/English) presentations on parent leadership and bilingual early childhood education. As in previous conferences, there were small group dialogues and reports to the large group.

During the last three years, IDRA has been expanding parent leadership opportunities by hosting live interactive video conferences. For each, we have joined 10 or more Texas sites with educators and parents. The presentations and conversations have been bilingual (Spanish/English), and the panelists have

Valued Parent - continued on page 13

Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement

- Parenting
- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Learning at home
- Decision-making
- Collaborating with the community

IDRA's Four Types of Parent Leadership

- Parents as teachers
- Parents as resources
- Parents as decision-makers
- Parents as leaders and trainers

Valued Parent - continued from page 12
been parents and educators presenting on parent leadership, bilingual education, quality early education programs, and after school programs. The process has allowed for interaction across all sites, with discussions and problem solving using vignettes related to the conference topics. These video conferences also gave new access to technology to parents who had not previously experienced it and provided one more type of laboratory for leadership development.

Advocacy can burn out the isolated leader. IDRA has had consistent and persistent success in our efforts to support parent leadership. We have seen some people pull back and then return. Because of this phenomenon, we encourage emerging leaders to follow our model of peer support and connection. The leadership aspects that we will continue to nurture surround issues of sustainability, tenacity, and commitment over time.

We have participated in and experienced other programs that focus on teaching parents their rights. Many advocacy organizations have developed excellent materials and training programs to do this. We do not wish to recreate those processes, and we support any and all programs that teach parents about their rights and the children's rights.

Research Challenges

IDRA operates on a research-based and data-driven process. Yet our commitment to all children is, in many aspects, an act of faith and a position of advocacy that comes from our sense of justice, democracy and compassion. We will not be diverted by faulty research that attempts to prove an inherent inferiority of particular ethnic groups. We will never support the idea that economically-disadvantaged, limited-English-proficient and minority-families have little hope for their children to succeed in school because of inherent "deficits" in their family structure, culture or class. In fact, IDRA has research demonstrating otherwise (Robledo Montecel, et al., 1993).

Currently, research on what affects student achievement is driving reform efforts. In this environment and public dialogue, high standards have become the linchpins of improving education and creating an educated citizenry. There are obviously serious questions to many parts of the syllogism. One widespread, though questionable, indicator is the standardized test. Test scores are being touted as effective measures of student achievement, and, therefore, indicators of good schools, effective curriculum and instruction, equity, and good parent support.

All IDRA efforts are aimed at

Valued Parent - continued on page 14

Save This Date

Eighth Annual IDRA
La Semana del Niño
Early Childhood
Educators Institute™
April 24 - 26, 2001
San Antonio, Texas

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In April, IDRA worked with **11,729** teachers, administrators and parents through **102** training and technical assistance activities and **206** program sites in **13** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- Seventh Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute
- Dropout Prevention
- Diversity in the Classroom
- Integrating Technology into Campus and District Implementation Plans
- Alternative Assessment

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- New Braunfels Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Texas Education Service Center, Region I
- Jemez Mountain Schools, New Mexico
- Mission ISD, Texas
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Activity Snapshot

This year, IDRA held a series of live interactive video conferences for 300 Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors in 18 schools in 12 separate cities. IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an internationally-recognized cross-age tutoring program in schools across the United States, Great Britain and Brazil. By connecting students in four separate cities at a time, these events give tutors the opportunity to meet each other across state boundaries and the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the students communicate with each other via fax and as key pals (electronic pen pals) prior to their video conference as well. The program's video conference model is designed to build students' literacy and skills related to state and national academic standards. It also supports key components of this highly successful dropout prevention program.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210 444-1710.

Valued Parent - continued from page 9

producing excellent schools that work for all children. So in our parent participation efforts, we recognize the importance of students' learning, achieving and having great success in school, from the elementary school level to the post-secondary school level. We are left with the challenge to support parent advocacy of these issues on the one hand, and the need to measure impact of parent advocacy on the other.

IDRA's court testimony on the rights of children of undocumented workers to a free public education is an example. We measure our impact by those thousands of children who are receiving an education in spite of prejudices that others may feel toward recent immigrant families. We know that all those students that have become literate and computer-proficient citizens and workers in our society would have ended up as illiterate low-wage earners in bottom level jobs if the Supreme Court had not defended their right to an education.

We must advocate parent leadership in spite of the difficulty of measuring its impact. This difficulty is not a problem of having no impact to measure. It is in determining how to measure the impact on children's learning, over time, of a single factor (parent leadership) in the midst of multiple factors.

Our challenge is to find the ways to document the effects of parent leadership in education. When a group of courageous parents defend their children's right to have a state-of-the-art campus in their *barrio* with effective, appropriately credentialed teachers and with spacious facilities and reasonable student-teacher ratios, we must document the effect on the children. It is likewise important that we document and recognize the value of parents defending their own rights to be heard and seen as real stakeholders in education. It can be done, and we encourage the research community to put effort into it.

Otherwise, we will continue to show simply that parents who read produce children who read. As a result, schools' activities for parent involvement will primarily consist of classes to teach parents to read and help their children with homework.

The preponderant volumes of research are looking at family patterns, education and relationships at home. From these studies, researchers will continue to portray families through deficit model lenses: some families are broken and need to be fixed. The easy or expedient path in parent involvement research is to document "good" vs. "not-so-good" family patterns and then develop a program to turn the "not-so-good" to the "better" and document how the children improve in school when their parents become "better" parents. Usually, this pattern merely serves to reinforce race, ethnic and class biases.

We believe that parents will ultimately make a critical difference in ensuring that our neighborhood public schools provide the best possible education for all children. Parent leadership will make it happen.

Moreover, there is a burgeoning industry of parent educators who are developing programs to meet the needs of parents who feel guilty about not being the best of parents. This guilt trip is clearly a cheap shot to which most parents can be the prey. We at IDRA are not assuming perfection, nor are we impractical idealists about families. Obviously, some families have serious problems. But that reality can apply to families of any race, ethnicity, culture, class and neighborhood. Perhaps family "problems" are simply more visible in poorer neighborhoods, particularly when this is the main place researchers are looking.

Feasibly, we cannot measure how many field workers today have a better living wage, accessible restrooms and other protections as workers because Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta and others provided leadership in fighting for their rights. It is equally difficult to empirically measure the benefits to society of Rosa Parks' decision to stay in her seat at the front of the bus. Yet few doubt the tremendous positive results of these actions.

Our faith in parent leadership in education presents a similar challenge. We believe that parents will ultimately make a critical difference in ensuring that our neighborhood public schools provide the best possible education for all children. Parent leadership will make it happen. Our hearts and our experiences know: All children can learn. No child is expendable; all families are valuable.

Resources

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For information on Creating Family Friendly Schools contact the education service center in your region or you call the STAR Center at 1-888-FYI-STAR. Copies are available through RMC Research Corporation for $250 each (1-800-922-3636).

RE-CONNECT

Reform in Education: Communities Organizing Networks for Emerging Collaborations with Teachers

Comprehensive Parent Involvement Initiative

Through the national Goals 2000 Initiative, the U.S. Department of Education has established parent information and resource centers (PIRCs) across the country to bring together parents, schools, universities and community organizations as well as businesses to support under-served student populations.

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is proud to announce that it is establishing *Reform in Education: Communities Organizing Networks for Emerging Collaborations with Teachers* (RE-CONNECT), the center that serves Texas.

What are the goals of RE-CONNECT?

RE-CONNECT is...

- ✓ Providing training and technical assistance to parent educators.
- ✓ Establishing new preschool program sites that will serve as model sites.
- ✓ Assisting existing preschool program sites to improve the quality of their services, and.
- ✓ Building a state-wide network of parents who will serve as parent leaders.

What is the basic principle of RE-CONNECT?

RE-CONNECT's work is based on the valuing principle that recognizes all parents as teachers and leaders regardless of economic condition or background.

What is the model of parental involvement RE-CONNECT will use?

RE-CONNECT will follow an innovative model of parent involvement developed by IDRA that goes beyond the standard approach to parental involvement. National studies and research support understandings of parents as teachers, parents as resources, and parents as decision-makers. IDRA builds upon these and expands upon traditional approaches by emphasizing parents as leaders and as trainers of other parent leaders.

Who does RE-CONNECT serve?

RE-CONNECT serves parents of children age birth through 5 and parents of school-age children.

What does the program emphasize?

A primary focus for RE-CONNECT is families of pre-school children ages birth through 5 and parents of school-age children. Also, the center will make special efforts to reach low-income, minority and limited-English-proficient parents. Some of the tools to be used by the project for its support activities will include: parent-to-parent training, a hot line, an interactive web site and a referral network for parents based upon local priorities.

As a result, RE-CONNECT will do the following:

- ✓ Increase the number and types of partnerships between parents and schools.
- ✓ Increase parents' awareness of educational issues.
- ✓ Establish and expand upon parent support services provided through Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY).
- ✓ Develop and sustain partnerships and networks with other organizations, agencies and parent centers.

What impact will RE-CONNECT have?

RE-CONNECT expects the following results:

- ✓ Improved levels of parent involvement in their children's schools.
- ✓ Increased support to schools to develop strategies for encouraging ongoing parental involvement.
- ✓ Increased numbers of parents participating in training sessions.
- ✓ Increased parent involvement in educational decision-making.
- ✓ Increased parental awareness of education issues.
- ✓ New and strengthened partnerships between school, home and community.
- ✓ Greater access to information for parents.
- ✓ The development and use of materials that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

How can I learn more about RE-CONNECT?

Additional information about RE-CONNECT is available through IDRA:

Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190
phone 210/444-1710
fax 210/444-1714
contact@idra.org
www.idra.org

The project directors at IDRA are Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., and Frances M. Guzman, M.Ed.

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization, directed by Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., dedicated to creating schools that work for all children. As a vanguard leadership development and research team for more than 26 years, IDRA has worked with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities. IDRA conducts research and development activities, creates, implements and administers innovative education programs and provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance.

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A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

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- Life skills lessons for the classroom that cover topics such as getting college information from the school counselor, identifying a support system, reaching goals, knowing self-worth, having community pride, overcoming stereotypes, and linking hobbies with career choices.
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(**Teacher's Guide** ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

Developed and distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association: 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714; e-mail: contact@idra.org. *It is IDRA policy that all orders totalling less than $30 be pre-paid.*

"Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus:
Educational Pipeline

ISSN 1069-5672 *Volume XXVII, No. 7 August 2000*

Development Through Engagement: Valuing the "At-Promise" Community

Rosana Rodríguez, Ph.D. and Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D.

Inside this Issue:

Community task force gives schools new vision

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Washington, D.C.

Education pipeline statistics

Education has traditionally been the business of the professional educator. Engaging the community is often looked upon with nervousness and as an effort to pre-empt the educator's role. Yet the literature points to the value of partnership, of pulling together as a learning community to create schools, colleges and universities that work for our diverse student population and our society. We shortchange ourselves when we do not partner with the community meaningfully and create an environment that fosters human development, creativity and academic achievement.

Why is it that in some communities, families and schools can be very effective in creating successful educational experiences? It is the formation and nurturing of strong consistent relationships built on respect and trust and focused on the well-being of youth that makes the difference.

Successful relationships are based on recognizing the critical roles that communities, families and educational institutions play. There are certain elements at the community, family and educational institution levels that must coexist if youth are to maximize the benefits of the educational process (see figure on Page 11). Experience shows that effective engagement is more than merely getting parents to sponsor class parties or even to participate in the decision-making of the school.

The term *at-risk* has become educational jargon to describe individuals and groups who supposedly lack resources or the ability to achieve. But, an *at-promise* individual or community is one whose potential and commitment is waiting to be tapped. Our premises of an at-promise community are based on the work of various individuals and institutions that have devoted themselves to creating models that consider human beings as valuable with great potential for contributions that enrich all of our endeavors and result in meaningful civic participation.

This article is the first part of a series of three articles written for educators around the topic of engaging youth, community and institutions that are at-promise. These articles also embrace the goals of educational equity. Engagement is an indispensable step for educational systems in achieving equity as described by Bradley Scott, director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity:

- Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes,
- Equitable access and inclusion,
- Equitable treatment,
- Equitable opportunity to learn, and
- Equitable resources (2000).

At-Promise Models

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) based its Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program on the premise that all children, families and communities are valuable, none is expendable. In his article, "Keeping the Faith: Valuing Parents," Aurelio M.

Valuing "At-Promise" - continued on page 2

Valuing "At-Promise" - *continued from page 1*

Montemayor, M.Ed., describes a paradigm that contrasts with the traditional deficit-model orientation that characterizes most educational programs designed to serve minority and economically-disadvantaged students (1996). He describes this "valuing" model:

> Valuing assumes tremendous potential. Applied to adults it means: Parents want the best for their children in education, career choices and future economic security. They want happiness and tranquility. They want to be viewed as capable and intelligent, regardless of background, educational experience and economic status (Montemayor, 1996).

Other disciplines, such as health, social work and psychology, show a deep concern for labels such as "at risk" that denote a self-inflicted insufficiency, and furthermore, a focus on the "victim" as the culprit for such a condition.

For example, the National Resilience Resource Center (part of the University of Minnesota's Maternal and Child Health program) presents a powerful new paradigm for reculturing health systems with youth resilience in mind. Known as the *health realization* model, the goal of their approach is to view all students, residents or clients in a community being served as being "at promise" rather than "at risk" (Marshall, 1998). Their philosophy is grounded in resilience research spanning more than 50 years in many disciplines.

This is the at-promise community. To recognize communities as at-promise rather than at-risk is a fundamental shift.

As a corollary, the Search Institute has identified 40 developmental assets and supports a growing network of 450 communities seeking to unleash asset-building power through the Healthy Communities – Healthy Youth national initiative that began in 1996. Models of developmental assets and assets-building approaches are spreading as states team together to share lessons learned (Benson, 1998).

Other significant efforts at the international level describe a development matrix, with a strong emphasis on the role of human creativity as a transdisciplinary process, a process of ongoing interaction and interdependence, a process in constant motion, whereby systems can empower one another through engagement and mutually supportive action. The matrix identifies support systems within a community and moves along a scale of independence to one of interaction and synergy (Max-Neef, 1991).

The At-Promise Community

Creating a partnership relationship requires a paradigm shift. The at-promise way of thinking pursues, values and unconditionally integrates the "soul" of the community into the educational process. Recognizing communities as at-promise rather than at-risk means capitalizing on the community's assets, pointing to possibilities rather than stressing dysfunctionality, and turning away from limiting labels and diagnostic approaches. This fundamental shift implies greater engagement of communities at all points of the educational pipeline (Marshall, 1998).

The at-promise view focuses on capitalizing potential and broadening possibilities. It builds on a vantage point of strengths. It contrasts with the idea of labeling communities that are primarily in need of intervention as at-risk (Marshall, 1998).

This view does not naively dismiss the realities of circumstances. Rather, it incorporates an aggressive, pro-active assets-based approach. This approach governs how we design effective development strategies to address issues that impede student success and have a negative impact on access, retention and graduation rates for all youth, especially those in under-resourced communities (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993).

The key actors in a community are described by Peter Benson as the "people

Valuing "At-Promise" - *continued on page 9*

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The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, © 2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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A Note to Say "Thank You"

Bradley Scott, M.A.

I was having a rough day at the office when I got one of those jolts that lifts my spirits and validates the work we do here at the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE). The SCCE is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve schools and education agencies in Arkansas Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas in the areas of race, gender, and national origin desegregation.

The jolt was unexpected but most appreciated. I received a copy of a report from a district we had been working with. The report outlined comprehensive action plans to assure educational equity in the district. It showed that the district had taken the work we accomplished together and moved it to a higher level, a level of planned action!

I am not sure what the end will bring. I am not sure to what degree the students will benefit from the changes that are being proposed. I am not sure the action teams who created the plans fully understand what they have committed to. I am not even sure the board of trustees who ordered the development of the report envisioned such comprehensive proposals.

I am sure, however, that if the district carries out what it proposed in the action plan, it will make a difference for the students of the district and the community.

Whatever the outcome of the action plan, I thought I should write a note to the board of trustees of the district, the superintendent, the staff, and the parents and community for what they have created. First, I should give you some background information to give you better insight as to what an accomplishment this action plan is.

Audit Leads to Formation of Community Task Force

In May of 1999, the IDRA SCCE was contacted by the school district to provide technical assistance by conducting an audit of equal educational opportunity. The board and staff wanted to know if they were providing all students with an excellent and equitable opportunity to receive the kind of education necessary to achieve high standards.

During one of its regularly scheduled meetings, the board proposed that the district petition the court to be released from the court's supervision of its desegregation efforts. To the board's surprise, African American and Hispanic community members raised serious objections. This segment of the community said that there were still serious educational problems that had not yet been resolved and that might not be resolved if the court was not providing oversight.

The community outcry was a wake-up call for the board that something might be wrong. The board directed that a study be conducted by a 21-member community-based task force to research the matter. The task force had seven Anglo members, seven African American members, and seven Hispanic members. It was balanced by gender and was heterogeneous by job or profession, parent and community type (married, single head of household, etc.), level of education, language, economic level and geographical location in the community. The task force was charged with finding out what is and is not working in the district. Members were to present a set of recommendations for action by December of 1999.

The board directed the superintendent and his staff to provide whatever support would be necessary to conduct the study. The superintendent was also asked to provide the greatest access possible so that the task force's

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A Note - continued from page 3

work would not be interfered with or blocked and so that members would have all of the information they would need to complete their charge.

The superintendent and staff had no decision-making authority about what the task force decided to do or what the final report would reflect. Their role was strictly to support the task force through information dissemination and acquisition and the provision of resources to conduct task force business. The superintendent and staff (including central office personnel, a principal from each campus, the director of community relations, and clerical and secretarial personnel) attended all of the regularly scheduled meetings. Yet, they exercised no voice or authority to conduct business. The community task force members exercised all leadership with guidance and support from IDRA.

During a period of seven months, the 21-member community task force gathered data and information in seven areas of study:

- status of equitable education opportunity;
- work of the desegregation committee (an entity established by the court to monitor and report to the court the district's desegregation efforts);
- cultural awareness and sensitivity;
- racial discrimination and segregation;
- parental involvement;
- facilities; and
- staffing patterns and perceptions.

The group formed tri-ethnic teams that each assumed leadership in one of these areas by gathering data; by reviewing archival data; conducting community and staff surveys; interviewing staff, parents and community members; conducting focus group discussions; visiting campuses; making school and classroom observations; and conducting any other data and fact-finding procedures that would yield information as a basis for making recommendations.

From an analysis of all of the information that was gathered by the tri-ethnic teams with support from the staff and volunteer citizens from the community, the task force made 25 recommendations for action in the seven areas of study. The task force made its official report to the board during the December 1999 board meeting.

In January of this year, the task force members officially presented their report to the community. Almost 1,000 people were in attendance to hear the report and to make comments to the board.

It was during the community meeting in January that the board of trustees directed the superintendent and his staff to create action teams made up of staff members and community volunteers to create plans for implementing each of the recommendations. Where full implementation was not practical, the teams were directed to explain the reason, and to create a plan for what would be practical and in the fullest spirit of "good faith."

It was the action report that was the breath of fresh air that I received on that day in the office. Miraculously, the receipt of that package redefined my day. To you, and all of you in districts and communities that are "getting it," I just wanted to send the above note to say thank you.

Bradley Scott, M.A., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development and the director of IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity. Comments and questions may be sent to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Dear Colleague,

You cannot imagine what a refreshing and pleasant surprise it was to receive your report of comprehensive action plans to assure educational equity in your school district. I have had a chance to review it, and it truly does hold great promise. We here at the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity sincerely thank you. In addition to thanking you for remembering to include the IDRA SCCE on your distribution list, I am writing to ask you to keep three important thoughts in mind as you proceed. First, I want to remind you that we are here to continue to support you and your efforts to create schools that work for all learners. IDRA publicly reaffirmed that commitment in its January 1999 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*:

> IDRA sees disparities and has genuine concerns about the quality of education for our children and consistently values our community by providing accurate information and spurring leadership. We inform the community and raise the conscience and compassion of the community to resolve disparities and the results of historical racism. The issues we bring to the community are not easy or popular... The messages we consistently push in our community work include: [involvement brings opportunity, the community can help to create opportunity,] and all people are valuable. We can make our schools and communities work for everyone when we work together.

Second, I want to remind you that the easiest part of your work has just been completed. Determining where you are, where you want to go, and how you plan to get there is an easier task than actually getting there, even though the work, time, energy, effort and resources you – and we – put into getting to this point have been considerable.

Finally (and please remember this my friends) "getting there," your success, will not be measured by the programs and activities you create and implement, but by the high student achievement and other students outcomes you produce as a result of those action plans, programs and activities.

Be of good courage in the work that lies ahead and remember that the bottom line should always be the students. It should be about all of the students of your district regardless of their race, color, nationality, language, economic circumstance, or other aspect of difference. When people get emotional, egos rage, self interest and political will flairs, or prejudice, cynicism, hate, poor judgement, ignorance, faulty logic, poor reasoning, or plain stupidity rear their ugly heads, remember the bottom line: **The academic, social and civic success of all of the students of your district is what matters.** Be ever mindful of your responsibility to them and be honest to them and yourselves. They and you deserve no less.

I wish you well and better than that!

Sincerely,

Bradley Scott
Director, South Central Collaborative for Equity
Intercultural Development Research Association

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – Another Success Story

Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

In 1996, Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School in Washington, D.C., was facing the same daily challenges that most urban schools face: violence, high poverty, lack of resources, high density, etc. It was in transition with new leadership at the helm. To add to the complexity, the school faced beginning the school year without books for its students. The U.S. Congress had not agreed on a budget, and with its continuing resolution, some budgets were paralyzed, including the D.C. Public Schools budget, which must be approved by Congress. That meant vendors could not be paid upon delivery of services and the book vendor was unwilling to take the risk (after the onslaught of bad press, the vendor finally relented after school began).

In the midst of such difficulties, school staff were anxious to find a solution to high absenteeism, disciplinary action rates, and dropout rates; and low self-esteem and achievement scores for so many of its students. D.C. Public Schools staff learned about the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). The program would not solve everything. But it could make a positive difference in their students' lives.

Since 1984, the program has had clear evidence of success across the country with students who were often described as the "throwaways" – students who were minority, from high poverty families, often mobile, retained at least once, considered "low achievers" and had low self-esteem; students who would most likely drop out of school unless someone intervened.

Staff decided they would intervene with the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program beginning in January 1996. Together with two partner elementary schools, IDRA and The Coca-Cola Foundation began a three-year partnership of support.

Throughout the life of the program, IDRA would provide a full range of training, technical assistance, evaluation and support materials needed to preserve the integrity of the program. IDRA's ongoing evaluation would provide insights into the program's impact on the valued youth tutors – what worked best during the school year and what aspects of the program needed to be strengthened for subsequent years. The school system would provide the support needed to ensure the program's success including release time for a teacher coordinator to work with the tutors, recognition events for the students, and timely data collection for the evaluation.

"It's important to the tutees that I help them, and if I can make a difference to them then I feel like I'm special and important."

– Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutor, Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School, 1997-98

Three years later, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has, in fact, made a positive difference in many lives. Each year, all of the valued youth tutors in Washington, D.C., remained in school – a remarkable achievement.

The Essence of the Program

The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program takes middle and high school students who are considered to be in at-risk situations, and places them in positions of responsibility, tutoring elementary school students for one class period a day, four days a week. The fifth day is dedicated to strengthening their own tutoring skills, literacy, self-esteem and leadership. The program's research-based instructional and support strategies strengthen the philosophical base and basic premise – that *all students are valuable, none is expendable.*

The program is flexible, readily adaptable to individual contexts. But, research has shown that certain elements are critical, such as paying tutors for the work they do or having experienced content area teachers serve as the program's teacher coordinators. (The essence of the program and its results are summarized in the box on Page 6.)

The Evaluation of the Program

These are the essential elements by which IDRA and the participating schools, hold themselves accountable. These elements are also the drivers for the evaluation design – one of the most rigorous and comprehensive in the country. The pre- and post-test design includes quantitative and qualitative measures, including standardized and validated pre- and post-test instruments and classroom observations. The hard numbers only tell part of the story; qualitative measures help tell the rest of the story of impact – measures such as tutors' monthly journals and participant interviews.

IDRA developed a report to do justice to the extraordinary commitment of individuals, adults and youth, who participated in a program allowing them to make a positive difference in more than 300 young lives in D.C. public schools.

The Program's School Support

Over the three years, IDRA and The Coca-Cola Foundation provided extraordinary support for the D.C. public schools. In addition to the program materials (implementation guides, tutor workbooks, evaluation instruments, reports, etc.), IDRA increased its technical assistance to the school each year: from 20 consultant days to 40 days to a staggering 104 days the third year. This does not include all of the off-site consultation and program coordination activities conducted by IDRA staff. Likewise, Mr. Enrique Watson, the principal, and Mr. Courtney Adams, the school's teacher coordinator, showed extraordinary commitment to the program's success, always making the time for the tutors, juggling schedules, resolving conflicts, and celebrating successes.

Coca-Cola VYP – continued on page 6

Coca-Cola VYP – continued from page 5

The Tutors

A total of 63 tutors participated in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program at Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School. During the first two years, the tutors were eighth graders. Seeing a need for earlier intervention, Lincoln Multicultural included 10 seventh graders during the third year.

About, one-half of the tutors were Hispanic; one-third were African American; the rest were Asian American or non-Hispanic Whites. Of those students reporting, all were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. One-third of the tutors also qualified for Title I. Half had participated in bilingual education or English as a second language (ESL) programs. Interestingly, only three of those reporting had been retained in grade (in other program school sites, more tutors have a history of retention). Many of the Hispanic tutors were bilingual and used their bilingualism with the tutees, helping them understand the content in their native language.

Tutoring in the Classroom

Empirical research on the program has found that three tutees per tutor is the recommended ratio. This maximizes impact for the tutor and tutee as well as providing the opportunity for the tutor-tutee bond to form – a critical aspect of the program's success. Most of the tutors at Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School worked with one or two tutees.

Tutors worked with tutees primarily in mathematics and language arts. The elementary school teachers consistently reported that the tutors were actively involved with the tutees in the learning process, that they listened to the tutees, were patient with them, spoke comfortably in English and Spanish (as needed), understood the material to be taught, had appropriate learning expectations of their tutees, and were always excited about the tutoring and seeing their tutees and the elementary school teacher. They also reported that the tutees, in turn, listened to the tutors, also participated in the learning process and looked to their tutors for guidance.

"I'm going to go all the way. Some people don't believe me, but I'm going to finish high school, and go all the way through school, and then I'm going to find a mansion to buy. They'll see."

– Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutor, Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School, 1996-97

Tutors' Successes: Achievement

The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is designed primarily to keep students in school who once were considered being in at-risk situations. The program does this by making school meaningful for them, by providing an opportunity for them to contribute and by making a difference in younger students' lives. With a growing sense of responsibility and pride, positive recognition and instruction, tutors stay in school and succeed. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program helped 63 tutors at Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School stay in school by providing them with the opportunity to help others. This, in and of itself, is a major achievement. But there is more.

For students to maintain their average grades during the turbulent middle school years is an accomplishment. For students to exceed this is extraordinary. For example, during 1996-97, tutors at Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School maintained their average mathematics grade. Yet three tutors distinguished themselves by raising their averages: from a D+ to a B+, from a D to a B-, and from a C- to a B. To increase their averages one to two letter grades after only one semester of intervention is a major achievement.

The same phenomenon occurs for tutors' average grades in English. For most, the average grade is maintained, but several tutors increased their average grades from a C to an A-, from a D- to a B and from a D+ to an A-.

During the first program year at Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School, there was no statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-

Coca-Cola VYP – continued on page 7

IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

Essence of Program

- Cross-age tutoring (ongoing, sustained relationship; small ratio; ample age and grade level difference; appropriate instructional level).
- Direct rewards given to tutors.
- Adults who directly value and work with and/or supervise students.
- Cross-level coordination.
- Accountability (assessment and evaluation).
- Planned instructional tasks (interaction between tutors and tutees).
- Tutors do not lose academic credit for participating in the program.
- Program acknowledges, celebrates and utilizes linguistic and cultural strengths.
- Elementary teachers want the tutors in their classrooms, understand their role, provide positive feedback, and monitor activities.
- Voluntary and willing participation by all.
- Regular class for tutors.
- Regular, consistent and predictable tutoring.
- Student-centered curriculum for tutors: tutoring, literacy and sense of self.
- Strengthened students' support network including families.

Essence of Results

- Children stay in school.
- Children are more successful in school.
- Increased sense of self; expanded vision of their future.
- Connection to school; belongingness.
- Adult valuing of children; increased valuing; renewed perceptions.

Coca-Cola VYP - continued from page 6

tutors' average number of disciplinary action referrals. This is understandable given that their average at the beginning of the year was 0.2. The average number of days absent also remained the same, with the beginning average at 10.2. Importantly, the qualitative data present an overwhelmingly positive picture of impact for the tutors as was evident in their monthly journals and case study interviews.

The second program year had greater successes for tutors with similar academic achievement trends as the year before. What was noteworthy the second year is that even more tutors excelled academically, bringing up their average grades, in some cases from F's to A's and B's. Their average disciplinary action referrals also showed a statistically significant decrease from 1.7 to 0.3 ($p < .01$).

The third program year showed the greatest impact. Tutors raised their average grades in mathematics and English three and four letter grades: from F's and D's to B's and A's. Average disciplinary action referrals decreased significantly from 7.8 to 1.3 days ($p < .001$). Individual successes included tutors decreasing their referrals from 20 to zero, 20 to three and 12 to one. The average number of days absent decreased from 16 to nine. Although not statistically significant, for many tutors and their tutees, it was personally significant that they were in school more often the third program year. One tutor decreased the number of days absent from 40 to five days; another went from 30 days to one day absent.

IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors from Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School in Washington, D.C., pose at a Leadership Day in December 1998.

Tutors' Successes: New Vistas

One of the other benefits of the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is the opening of new vistas for the tutors. This usually happens through the program's field trips and guest speakers. Tutors get to visit new places and hear from people who may have started where the tutors are now and who have achieved personal and professional successes. Tutors at Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School were able to visit the MCI Center in Washington, D.C.; the Shenandoah Mountains in West Virginia; and the U.S. Capitol. Most of these places were only a few miles from their neighborhoods. But, until their involvement with the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, they may as well have been in another universe.

The Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School tutors also served as hosts to tutors from South San Antonio High School and Kazen Middle School – schools in the South San Antonio Independent School District (ISD). In December 1998, Southwest Airlines began a direct flight from San Antonio to Baltimore-Washington. To inaugurate the flight, Southwest Airlines and The Coca-Cola Foundation sponsored a trip for San Antonio valued youth tutors and their chaperones. For three days, tutors toured the major D.C. historical sites such as the Lincoln monument, the Korean War and Vietnam War memorials, and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. They rode the Metro (the first subway ride for most) and even had a private, guided tour of the White House arranged by Texas Congressman Ciro Rodriguez.

Taking full advantage of their time together, IDRA planned and conducted a Valued Youth Leadership Day to give the tutors a chance to exercise their innate leadership skills, share their experiences as tutors, share their challenges and successes with their tutees, and share their hopes and aspirations for their lives. These experiences will last long after the last tutor has graduated from high school and college.

Perhaps one of the most exciting journeys for the tutors was through cyberspace. During the second program year, IDRA, with support from The Coca-Cola Foundation, connected the Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School youth tutors with tutors from Brownsville ISD, a large school district in the valley and border region of Texas via video conference. Extensive coordination by IDRA collaborating with the school systems resulted in tutors first "meeting" each other as "key pals" (e-mail pen pals) and culminating in a cross-country video conference.

In preparing for their video conference, tutors strengthened their oral language, writing and presentation skills. They also enhanced their knowledge of technology, searching the Internet for information about their sister cities. Tutors' increasing knowledge of technology and their access to video conferencing was a tremendous opportunity, one not experienced by their peers or even many of their teachers.

Tutors' Successes: A Public Forum

On May 18, 1999, Mr. Courtney Adams, and two seventh-grade tutors, Mr. Marcus Price and Ms. Anna Rosario, did something that had never been done by any member of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program network. These representatives of Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions on "Dropout Prevention and Educating the Forgotten Half." The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was one of only four national programs highlighted.

This teacher and valued youth students from the D.C. Public Schools spoke eloquently and passionately about the impact of the program on lives – theirs and others. The significance of this event cannot be underestimated. In their own voices, a teacher and two students spoke

Coca-Cola VYP - continued on page 8

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of their success and achievement, of what is possible. Their testimony is a tribute to the success and achievement that D.C. Public Schools made possible.

Tutors' Successes: Personal Victories

Each of the valued youth tutors succeeded in ways that are, in fact, immeasurable: bringing pride to their families when their experience with the school had been one of concern and worry; bringing their insights, compassion and intelligence to their tutees who now had someone to listen to them, someone who understood them better than anyone else; and bringing higher expectations to their teachers who once saw them as troublemakers or lost causes and now saw them as invaluable young people.

Some of these successes are captured in the tutors' monthly journals and case study interviews. These data, in the tutors' own voices, speak to the power of a program that mobilizes school staff and brings out the best, the most valued essence, of students, families and educators. The following is one tutor's story as documented through an end-of-year interview.

"Emilio" is a 14-year-old eighth grader at Abraham Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School in Washington, D.C. He was born in Nicaragua, and he and his family immigrated to the United States four years ago. Emilio, his mother, father, and 12-year-old brother have lived in Washington, D.C., since they first arrived in this country. Emilio says that he learned to speak English after he arrived and was placed in bilingual and ESL classes in school.

He does not know his parents' levels of educational attainment, but he says that his mother babysits during the day, and his father works at Georgetown University, as well as at a second job. He says they want him to go to college and pursue a career. Emilio says he has always wanted to finish high school in order to have a career and money. He thinks he would like to go to Georgetown University and study medicine.

When asked if the program has brought about any change in his life, Emilio responds:

> Yeah, a lot. When I first came here, I was lost. Then my teacher got me into the program, and it got better. I got better in my classes and I'm getting better grades. I'm not chasing that many girls, like my teacher says. I'm not having that many problems now, and I do my work in class.

"I saw one of my first grade tutees on the playground by himself at about 8:00 at night. I took him to eat and then took him home. I was worried that he was out there by himself and thought it was my responsibility to help him."

– Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutor, Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School, 1998-99

Emilio says that the program has helped to change his behavior at home as well: "I used to act rude with my brother and now I try to talk to him so that he won't do bad things."

His role as a tutor does not end when he leaves the elementary school, because he tutors at home: "I am trying to teach my mom English. And, I'm teaching my brother, too, because he knows a little bit, but he needs to know more."

With regard to how he feels about himself, Emilio says: "I feel better now. Before the program, I felt lost. Before, I hung out with gangster people, but now I don't anymore."

Emilio tutors four students in the first and second grades. He says he will most remember that his tutees made him laugh. One of the things he says he will remember most about the program is that he got to spend time helping children and he got paid for it. Emilio says he does not think he would have initially enrolled in the tutoring program if a stipend were not provided. However, he feels differently now, and he would continue to tutor even if he did not get paid.

When asked how his family feels about the program, Emilio says, "My parents think the program has changed me a lot and they like it because now I get home early, I don't leave the house anymore, and now I do my homework at home."

Emilio says some of his friends are not as positive about the program:

> Some of them think it's alright, but some others think that I'm beginning to be different, because now I'm not the Emilio that I used to be – I have changed a lot. They tell me that I'm not the real Emilio. But, I don't care. I want to be the best. I like this Emilio.

As a result of his own transformation, Emilio says he wants his tutees to remember most that "people change." He adds:

> I have a tutee named Arnold and he says that when he grows up he wants to be by himself and live in the streets and be a gangster. I told him that he needs to be at home with his mom, help her work, get his high school diploma, go to college, and work.

Emilio feels that the program has made a tremendous impact on his life. He does not think he could have made it through the eighth grade without the program because it "helped me to get better grades and do my work; the other Emilio never came to class and didn't do any work."

As a result of his experience, Emilio says that he would teach his own children: "how to respect people, to learn, and to go to school. They have to do better things than I did. If I do well, they will have to do great."

In the Final Analysis

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program made a significant difference in students' lives. Students achieved academically and personally. They stayed in school, gave of themselves and in doing so, found their contributions valued and recognized, sometimes by those who had lost hope. The words of one tutor say much:

> Some teachers here say: 'You know, Michael, you're gonna have to stay back in the eighth grade. You'll have no chances, nothing.' And then when this program came along, everything started changing. Now, teachers have hope that I might make it and so do I.

These testimonials, coupled with the increases in grade averages and decreases in disciplinary action referrals and absenteeism, point to an unequivocal conclusion – the valued youth of Abraham Lincoln Multicultural Junior High School succeeded beyond anyone's expectations.

Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., coordinates IDRA's materials development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

For more information about the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program visit www.idra.org or contact Linda Cantu, M.A., at IDRA (210-444-1710).

Valuing "At-Promise" - continued from page 7

of the city, all of the socializing systems and the community infrastructures that inform them, including the media and local government" (1998). Knowing the key actors needed, the critical question in establishing strong relationships between educational institutions, communities and families now becomes: How can this paradigm shift occur?

In essence, educational institutions must partner in this effort and provide resources that can unleash a movement toward asset building that is related to students' academic success. Educational institutions should initiate efforts whereby the community profiles itself and identifies those assets from within that can be tapped or enhanced. Schools should re-examine their goals for parent and community involvement programs to ensure that their energies are channeled to accomplish a working partnership between educational institutions and the community. Colleges and universities can be important catalysts. They can develop strategies and provide leadership and resources to foster greater community engagement throughout the educational pipeline.

Benson presents a framework of community assets that are related to "the kinds of relationships, social experiences, social environments, and patterns of interaction" that produce the community support necessary for an effective partnership (1998). This framework includes eight asset types:

- ***Support:*** family involvement in the educational process, home support for education and the school's ability to provide a caring and encouraging environment;
- ***Empowerment:*** the community's actual and perceived sense of being valued and considered in key educational decisions;
- ***Boundaries and expectations:*** opportunities created for students to feel valued and understood, to experience friendships that model responsible behavior, and to develop in an environment of high expectations, both in the community and at school;
- ***Constructive use of time:*** families', students' and schools' actual use of time in and out of school to promote student success and achievement;
- ***Commitment to learning:*** families', communities' and schools' perception of the value of education and the motivation to excel and succeed academically;
- ***Positive values:*** a family's experience in the community in areas of social equality, integrity and compassion for others;
- ***Social competence:*** the community's ability to solve conflicts, experience and capitalize on diversity, and defy any negative or dysfunctional behavior; and
- ***Positive identity:*** a community experiencing a purpose in life and exercising control of their own lives.

The figure on Page 11 delineates the expectations to be realized in a productive relationship among the educational institution, the community and families. It shows the possibility of opportunity and the promise that communities and educational institutions can create when

Valuing "At-Promise" - continued on page 10

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In May, IDRA worked with **8,952** teachers, administrators and parents through **68** training and technical assistance activities and **250** program sites in **13** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- IDRA Project Alianza
- Student Leadership
- Bilingual Education Strategies
- Working with High-Risk Students
- IDRA Project FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal)

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Los Angeles County Office of Education, California
- Brownsville Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Garland ISD, Texas
- New Orleans Parish, Louisiana

Activity Snapshot

After receiving a number of sexual harassment complaints, administrators in a Louisiana school district requested staff training from the IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (SCCE) on the new requirements of the law regarding sexual harassment in schools. The SCCE is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. IDRA provided training in sexual harassment prevention to 120 principals and central office staff. As a result, administrators in the district developed campus level plans to ensure that students are protected from discrimination and adult-student sexual harassment. The plans are being implemented districtwide to prevent sexual harassment.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/444-1710.

Valuing "At-Promise" - continued from page 9

they work in concert and move united to unleash the power of their assets.

A Challenge and Opportunity for Engagement Across the Educational Pipeline

A major challenge for engagement is to eliminate misconceptions about communities and families that impede effective partnerships.

Misconception 1: Communities do not have the expertise to provide meaningful input or play a significant role in the educational process. This misconception is based on the myth that communities want to pre-empt the professional educator's decision-making authority in matters related to schooling. This false notion has been promoted often when community or parents are involved in what is called an "advisory role." Communities are asked for their input but ignored on matters related to a school's decision making. Mistrust and a posture of adversity have emerged as a result of this practice.

Misconception 2: Educational institutions can be successful without the support of the community. The speed with which changes occur in this era of information technology puts excessive demands on families and communities. These demands strain the role that educational institutions and communities have in educating youth. For example, intellectual and social tasks are more complex than ever. Communities respond by creating an array of service institutions to help meet these demands. These institutions can better serve our youth and families when they partner with communities and families to create healthy and caring neighborhoods.

Misconception 3: Some communities do not care about the success of education and consequently do not get involved in the educational process. Many times, community members and families feel unwelcome and intimidated by schools, consequently avoiding getting involved. Communities and families are aware of the importance the educational institution has on the future and welfare of its citizens and seek ways of becoming engaged. The responsibility of the institution is to create the avenues of opportunity and the vision for engaging communities in ways that strengthen those relationships and create nurturing environments that lead to happy and creative young people.

Did You Know?

Early Childhood Education

- **Three-year-olds from poor homes were enrolled in early childhood education at a rate of 29.7 percent, while 45.5 percent of those from non-poor homes were enrolled (NCES, 1999).**

High School Completion

- **High school completion rates remained roughly the same overall from 1988 to 1998, fluctuating between 84.5 to 86.5 percent.**
- **However, the method is changing sharply with alternative testing, such as the GED, rising steadily from 4.2 percent in 1988 to 10.1 percent in 1998.**
- **High school completers receiving diplomas have decreased from 80.3 percent in 1988 to 74.7 percent in 1998 (NCES, 1999).**

Over 12 million people 18-years-of-age or older had less than a ninth grade education in 1993 (Bureau of the Census, 1994).

Postsecondary Completion

- **Forty-three percent of 1989-90 beginning postsecondary students seeking an associate's degree had attained some degree or certificate five years after initial enrollment: 8 percent earned a bachelor's degree; slightly less than a quarter (23.7 percent) earned an associate's degree; and 11 percent earned a certificate. Students who did not earn a degree were enrolled for an average of 19 months (NCES, 1996).**

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

Engaging An At-Promise Community

The move toward greater engagement is a critical step in creating a new paradigm of promise for student success. *Engagement* refers to educational institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research and outreach functions to become pro-actively involved with their communities, however these may be defined in the local setting (Kellogg Commission, 1999).

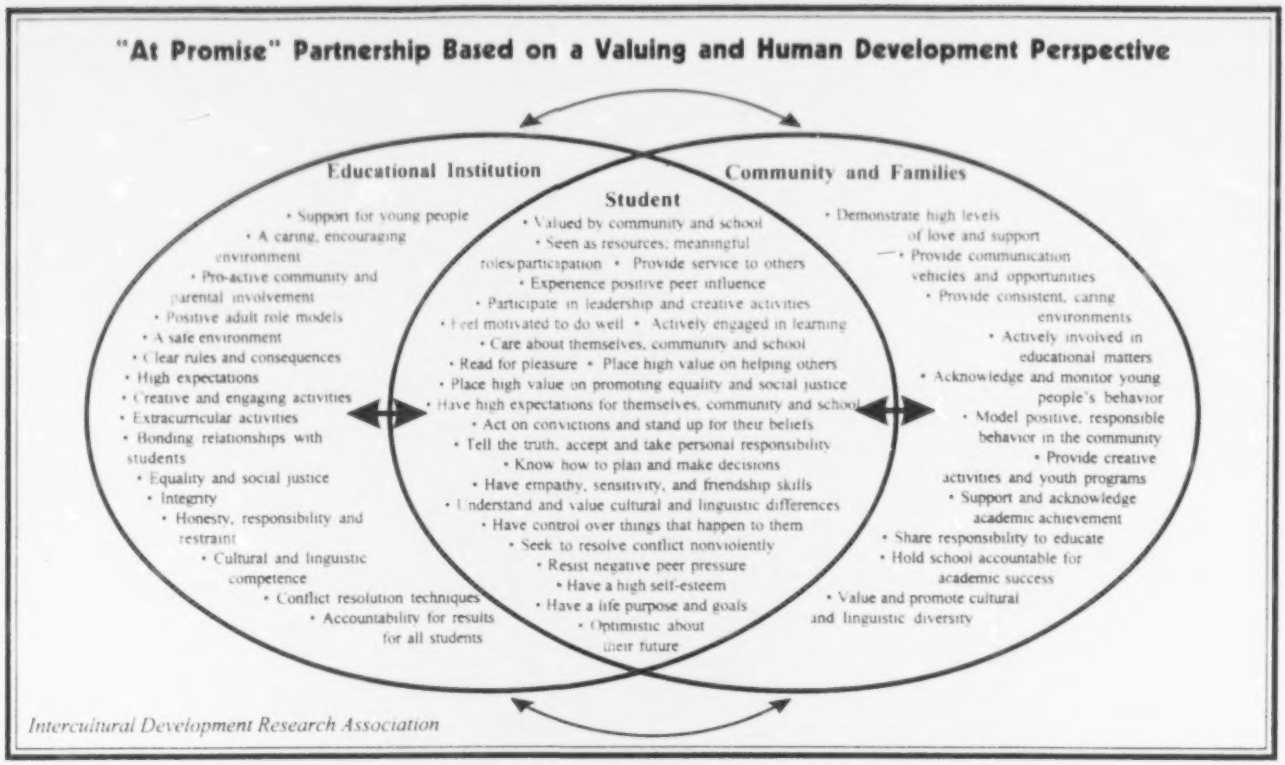
All sectors have a stake in the process. Educators, parents, community members, researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders can be catalysts to build broader ownership.

How can this successful engagement occur? First, we can start by fostering a culture of at-promise thinking that capitalizes on resilience and adaptability. Second, we prepare educational systems at all levels for this paradigm shift and the systemic changes that will be required to engage communities in a more formal and productive way. Third, we must evaluate our strategies and share our best practices with other institutions and other sectors. We must foster opportunities for participation and multi-sector relationships around those best practices.

Interdependence is the underlying principle in this shift toward development through engagement. In establishing interdependence, the former self-reliance of each sector needs to be viewed in terms of an emerging horizontal interdependence across sectors including kindergarten through 12th grade schools, institutions of higher education, parents, and community entities that support youth and families.

The harmonious combination of objectives among these partnerships can achieve the individual and collective energy and satisfaction in planning for educational success. Ultimately, the at-promise approach benefits students at all

Valuing "At-Promise" - continued on page 11


"At Promise" Partnership Based on a Valuing and Human Development Perspective
Educational Institution
• Support for young people
• A caring, encouraging environment
• Pro-active community and parental involvement
• Positive adult role models
• A safe environment
• Clear rules and consequences
• High expectations
• Creative and engaging activities
• Extracurricular activities
• Bonding relationships with students
• Equality and social justice
• Integrity
• Honesty, responsibility and restraint
• Cultural and linguistic competence
• Conflict resolution techniques
• Accountability for results for all students
Student
• Valued by community and school
• Seen as resources; meaningful roles/participation • Provide service to others
• Experience positive peer influence
• Participate in leadership and creative activities
• Feel motivated to do well • Actively engaged in learning
• Care about themselves, community and school
• Read for pleasure • Place high value on helping others
• Place high value on promoting equality and social justice
• Have high expectations for themselves, community and school
• Act on convictions and stand up for their beliefs
• Tell the truth, accept and take personal responsibility
• Know how to plan and make decisions
• Have empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills
• Understand and value cultural and linguistic differences
• Have control over things that happen to them
• Seek to resolve conflict nonviolently
• Resist negative peer pressure
• Have a high self-esteem
• Have a life purpose and goals
• Optimistic about their future
Community and Families
• Demonstrate high levels of love and support
• Provide communication vehicles and opportunities
• Provide consistent, caring environments
• Actively involved in educational matters
• Acknowledge and monitor young people's behavior
• Model positive, responsible behavior in the community
• Provide creative activities and youth programs
• Support and acknowledge academic achievement
• Share responsibility to educate
• Hold school accountable for academic success
• Value and promote cultural and linguistic diversity
Intercultural Development Research Association

Valuing "At-Promise" - *continued from page 10*
levels.

Benefits of Engagement

Parents are a child's first teachers. That context and environment contribute in equally critical ways to promote positive characteristics and values in young people not only in the early years, but across the educational pipeline. Parents escort their child through all the dramatic "firsts" and set the tone and style for their child's later life-long learning and social relationships with all others (Bornstein, 1998). Home and family provide multi-levels of caregiving and support for life-long learning. These include:

- Nurturing – meeting the biological, physical and health requirements of children;
- Socialization – visual, verbal, affective and physical behaviors parents use to engage their children;
- Didactic caregiving – strategies parents use to encourage their children to engage and understand the environment and enter the world of formal learning by providing opportunities to observe, imitate and learn; and
- Material caregiving – ways in which parents organize and arrange the home and local environment.

Engagement promotes a greater understanding of educational systems and communities and of the benefits of a working partnership that is based on mutual trust and respect.

Importance of Language and Culture

Honoring and preserving language and cultural traditions is an essential factor in successful engagement. It has been said that a people without knowledge of their language and culture is like a tree without roots. Parents, families and communities help to foster the values and culture that sustain a civilization. The community can help create or break a person's self-esteem for life-long learning.

Therefore, any effective strategy for engagement must honor, incorporate and aggressively seek out effective means for parent, family and community participation to act as a key resource for learning at all levels throughout the educational pipeline from pre-kindergarten to college graduation. This is key throughout the educational pipeline because not only is language the *expression* of a culture, but it also *generates* culture.

IDRA has been on the threshold of this new paradigm and has designed ways of working with educators and communities to forge alliances among schools, colleges and universities, and communities. The opportunities and the challenges are there for educational systems and communities to value and empower one another in ways that can result in more inclusive educational settings, increased academic achievement for all students, and a synergistic relationship that promotes growth and well-being across communities. Schools gain when they see the role of communities differently and tap into the assets of the community. Schools gain when they collectively and continuously transform themselves to keep pace with the extraordinary societal changes and expectations that this information technology age causes.

Resources

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Valuing "At-Promise" - *continued on page 12*

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Eighth Annual IDRA
La Semana del Niño
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Educators Institute™
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Internet Web Sites on Educational Pipeline

K12 Practitioners' Circle nces.ed.gov/practitioners
AmeriCorps www.cns.gov/americorps/index.html
American Association of School Administrators www.aasa.org
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development www.ascd.org
Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org
Communities in Schools www.cisnet.org
Council of Chief State School Officers www.ccsso.org
Council of the Great City Schools www.cgcs.org
Center for Research on Students Placed at Risk scov.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/CReSPaR.html
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
Kids Count Data www.acef.org/kidscount
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships www.edpartnerships.org
National Dropout Prevention Center and Network www.dropoutprevention.org/
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu
National Mentoring Partnership www.mentoring.org
National Research Council www.nas.edu/nrc
U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov
W.K. Kellogg Foundation www.wkkf.org

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

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IDRA Focus:
Leadership in Diversity

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

ISSN 1069-5672 *Volume XXVII, No. 8 September 2000*

Carrying Out Our New Promise

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Inside this Issue:

- **Educators outline equity challenges**
- Immigrant student's rights to attend public schools
- Marianita Chee's story

We celebrate diversity as strength, model leadership that maintains faith in every person's (child and adult) ability to learn and contribute, and value mutual respect and trust in building support for change. At the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), two initiatives funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation are allowing us to further this "valuing" concept in relationships among universities, public schools, parents and the broader community. Among the major goals for both projects is promoting *Leadership in Diversity*. ENLACE focuses on Latino students, while Project Alianza specifically focuses on English language learners and preparing teachers to address their assets. Leadership in Diversity is our phrase for a new paradigm in leadership.

Dr. José A. Cárdenas, IDRA founder and director emeritus, presented a paradigm shift with the publishing of *Theory of Incompatibilities: A Conceptual Framework for Responding to the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans*, co-written by Dr. Blandina Cárdenas (1977). In the textbook he wrote almost two decades later, he referred to a new educational paradigm that ensures the success of all children in school.

> For (this) new paradigm to be successful, it is necessary that it incorporate the three characteristics that have been so successful in innovative programs: valuing students, the provision of support services and the inter-relationships among home, school and family (Cárdenas, 1995).

In keeping with this concept, we extend "valuing" to the families and communities of the students, which now includes colleges and universities. Continuing Dr. Cárdenas' legacy, and that of many other pioneers of progress in education for all children (especially economically disadvantaged, minority, recent immigrant and those speaking a language other than English), we are now facilitating this new kind of leadership in diversity.

Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Dr. Cárdenas' successor as executive director of IDRA, recently rephrased the paradigm:

> The only thing we have to change is our belief that some students deserve success and others do not. The new rule is: All students stay in. The new promise is: All students succeed. Failure is not an option (2000).

Dr. Blandina Cárdenas, a professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, has assisted IDRA in developing the Leadership in Diversity model. We have conceptualized an "asset model" for this. It allows for the discovery of partners' capacities and assets and the application of those assets to seeking solutions to barriers that affect the development of a community.

In an article written last year about Project Alianza, Josie Danini Cortez states:

> As a general rule, universities and communities operate in a "provider-to-client" mode rather a partnership mode where both share a common goal and capitalize on each other's unique assets to reach that goal. Our chal-

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lenge will be to model and experience the benefits of educating a community as a partnership that acknowledges, cultivates and nurtures those assets that the university and community bring to the table (Supik, 1999).

The Purpose of Leadership in Diversity

The aims of *Leadership in Diversity* are to:

- Reconnect universities and local communities in a strong and lasting alliance where they mutually reinforce each other's assets and nurture a healthy relationship to resolve issues critical to the education of Latino students, and
- Consider and utilize the assets of the community in ways not previously done to improve academic access and success for Latino students.

The process is designed to cause universities and public school systems to value communities, including Latino parents, as assets that must be integrated into school improvement efforts and to cause institutional and community changes to be sustained beyond the life of the project and that continue to improve access of educational opportunities for Latino youth. The process will open communication within the university structure vertically and horizontally to improve recruitment, admission, and retention of Latino youth and to improve curricula across disciplines. It continually celebrates and acknowledges successes among academia, community colleges, kindergarten through grade 12 education, Latino neighborhoods and the community at large by increasing the quality of education provided to Latino youth. It also establishes and institutionalizes internal measures of institutional evaluation that incorporate the "asset mapping" paradigm.

Guiding Principles of Leadership in Diversity

The Leadership in Diversity model is guided by mutual partnerships in support of excellence that do the following:

- provide a firm foundation and blueprint for educational renewal and community regeneration,
- foster asset-based, internally-focused, and relationship-driven sharing of concerns to solve challenges affecting the health of schools and communities,
- build on the remarkable work already occurring in communities and universities; and
- build and rebuild relationships and partnerships among key stakeholders continually.

There are five operating principles and guidelines in the model:

- Celebrate diversity as strength.
- Maintain faith in every person's (child and adult) ability to learn and contribute.
- Value mutual respect and trust in building teams with true partnership and ongoing communication.

Carrying Out - continued on page 10

Partnerships for Successful Schools

The formation of the unique partnerships that characterize successful school programs requires at least the following to reduce the polarization and alienation that currently exists.

- A mutual respect among the school, the home and the community based on the assumption that each of the three entities has a vested interest in the successful schooling of the child.
- The clarification of the overlapping roles of the school, the home and the community in the education of the child.
- An opening and widening of doors to facilitate extensive interaction and the planning of cooperative activities.
- Extensive communication among the three entities.
- Participation by the three entities in making decisions impacting upon the child.

– Dr. José A. Cárdenas, *Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy* (1995).

In This Issue...

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12 Upcoming Events

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, ©2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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Equity Challenges Continue

Bradley Scott, M.A., and Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

Equity in education is improving, but it is far from a reality for all students. This was the sentiment expressed by education leaders in south central United States.

As a part of the ongoing commitment to identify and address issues that challenge school districts regarding race, gender and national origin equity, the Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE) held its annual Region VI focus group and work session in April. The SCCE is the federally-funded equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

The group was comprised of educators from selected school districts in the region, representatives from each of the five state departments of education, SCCE project associates who serve as technical assistance consultants, and IDRA staff. They participated in extended dialogs on a set of questions that assisted the SCCE in creating an updated needs assessment for the region.

The Condition of Civil Rights and Equity

Participants were asked to describe the condition of civil rights and equity in the areas of race, gender, and national origin. Some of the comments follow.

Race

- There is a need for protection from hate-based actions and racial hostility in schools.
- Parents are becoming more willing to raise questions about issues of fair treatment regarding race.
- Persistent issues of equity seem to defy treatment. Issues such as the achievement gap between minority and majority students and over- and under-representation in special education and gifted education programs still provide challenges that are difficult to confront.
- Improved accountability and monitoring systems are helping to provide more realistic information about what is and is not happening to students.
- The state departments of education are not providing a necessary and sufficient level of leadership in issues impacting educational equity regarding race.

Gender

- Sexual harassment in schools is a difficult challenge to address.
- The general low level of interest in gender issues among school staffs is reflected in issues such as:
  - a lack of access for girls in athletics and inappropriate desegregation of courses and programs by gender;
  - poor outreach to families regarding gender-related issues;
  - persistence of White male privilege in schools, classrooms, and program access;
  - treatment of minority women, including African American, Hispanic and Native American women, in all matters of gender equity;
  - the persistent inappropriate view that gender issues are only women's issues; and
  - the lack of consideration given to males and gender equity.

National Origin

- There is persistent hostility toward national origin minority families and students particularly regarding all aspects of inclusion and treatment in school environments.

Equity Challenges - continued on page 4

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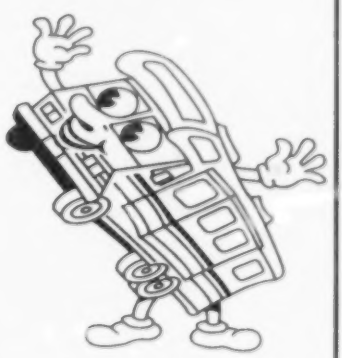
Go on a "Field Trip" on IDRA's Web Site



- Related *IDRA Newsletter* articles and projects
- Statistics, definitions, etc.
- Internet resources
- Internet links

Register for a special prize!

Answer the question of the month!

Each month we will ask a new question for readers online. A sample of responses will be posted online.

This month's question is...

What are you doing to encourage student leadership in your school or campus?

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Equity Challenges - continued from page 3

- There are persistent problems of school personnel's tendency to compartmentalize language issues so that they cannot think of linguistic difference and intelligence or competency at the same time in the same place.
- There has been failure to establish, implement and sustain strong, effective transitional bilingual programs that build English language proficiency to support healthy academic transitions from one language to another in courses and curricular offerings.
- There are continued problems with appropriate assessment and placement of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students.
- There is growing confusion around concepts and categories related to national origin minority students, including LEP status, immigrant status, citizenship status, ethnic and racial status, and recency of arrival status.

Obstructions to the Goals of Educational Equity

The group also identified some of the persistent issues that make it difficult to reach the goal of educational equity in race, gender, and national origin. Some of the issues the group identified follow.

- Lack of appropriate law or policy to ground more equitable treatment, in some instances.
- Closed or sometimes hostile political climate that exists in some communities and schools.
- Lack of appropriate funding to provide an equitable opportunity to learn.
- Failure to distribute resources for learning to all students in a fair, balanced and equitable manner.
- Unwillingness on the part of those in control to include all key stakeholders in decision making and problem solving.
- Inappropriate oversight, enforcement and sanctions for those who violate existing law and policy and discriminate against learners by race, gender, and national origin.
- A deficiency in the notion of "valuing" leading to biased views of who deserves and does not deserve excellent education.
- Continued blaming of the "victims" of inequity and discrimination for the outcomes of inequity and discrimination.
- Inability of some educators to respond appropriately to the diversity of students in their midst as seen in curriculum, schools, classrooms, and instructional methods and practices.

Factors Assisting Equity

In a similar fashion, the group discussed factors that are helping to establish equity and excellence in schools. Some of those factors follow.

- Oversight of external entities such as the federal courts and the Office for Civil Rights.
- Growing awareness and acceptance on the part of educators and citizens that no one wins when learners are failing or being forced out of schools.
- Increasing state educational standards and expectations for higher student performance.
- Improving accountability systems and measures on the part of state departments of education.
- Emerging voices of parents and community people who are expecting more from their schools and those who run them.
- Growing body of research evidence of programs that work to move all learners to higher outcomes given an opportunity to learn, resources for learning, and necessary and sufficient human and material supports for learning.

In addition to the extensive fact finding and needs assessment activity, the group also became involved in a special presentation with Dr. Chris Green of IDRA about technology and the equity gap in public schools. Her presentation was the basis for an article in the May issue of the *IDRA Newsletter* entitled, "Bridging the Digital Divide in Our Schools – Achieving Technology Equity for All Students." This discussion allowed the group to determine evidence of a district's responsiveness to the educational goals of equity (Scott, 2000) using a framework described by Dr. Adela Solis of IDRA in her February *IDRA Newsletter* article, "Equity Principles and School Reform: What It Takes to Ensure that 'All Means All,'" (Solis, 2000).

The results of the group's work will be published in an occasional paper with the working title, "The Evidence of Equity: Voices from the Field." This publication will expand and refine the discussion of the five goals of educational equity. It will also present the best thinking of educators throughout the SCCE service area on what would be the real proof or evidence that the various goals were being achieved in school systems and classrooms.

The SCCE staff appreciates the support and cooperation that is constantly and consistently shown by those educators, parents, and community people with whom they work in the schools and classrooms of federal Region VI. The annual focus group and work session continues to be one of the shining examples of the ongoing collaboration that exists between the SCCE and its client districts that helps to create schools that work for all learners. It is a collaborative relationship for which the SCCE is extremely grateful.

Resources

Green, L.C. "Bridging the Digital Divide in Our Schools – Achieving Technology Equity for All Students," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, May 2000).

Scott, B. "We Should Not Kid Ourselves: Excellence Requires Equity," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 2000).

Solis, A. "Equity Principles and School Reform: What It Takes to Ensure that 'All Means All,'" *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 2000).

Bradley Scott, M.A., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development and the director of IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity. Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., coordinates IDRA's materials development. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity is the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas in the areas of race, gender, and national origin desegregation. IDRA creates high-powered assistance for local education agencies through one-on-one interaction – such as training in the value of diversity and preventing sexual harassment – and other support assistance – such as training packages, videos, and modules for race, sex, and national origin equity. For more information contact IDRA at 210-444-1710 or contact@idra.org.

"Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way" Marianita Chee's Story

My family consists of my two children, ages 4 and 7, and my husband. My husband and I work for the same company, he works as a rolling stock mechanic at La Plata mine, and I am a mining engineer at Navajo mine. My dad is 86 years old and lives in Window Rock, Arizona, on the Navajo reservation. My mom died when I was 6 years old, so my dad raised those of us who were still at home. Most of us went to boarding school, but my dad was the one we came home to for vacations and holidays. I have seven sisters who are all older than me and four brothers, two of whom are older and two are younger.

Since my dad was the primary person in my life, I can honestly say he was a great supporter of my going into engineering. Although he has had no formal education and does not understand English, he made sure I had whatever book I ever wanted when I was real young. He also constantly told me that I needed to learn the ways of the Anglo people and that I needed to learn them well enough to put them to my use. I am sure he gave the same advice to all my brothers and sisters so that whenever I needed any help along the way, my family was always supportive and willing to help me.

When I tried to get a job while in high school, I was asked if I knew how to type, work a cash register or anything else. That was when I realized I needed to obtain some kinds of skills in order to get a job. I decided I wanted to become a coal miner like my dad. Since my high school counselor always told me the easiest and fastest way to get a job was to get a degree, I decided to apply this thought toward getting a job in a coal mine. That is how I came to be an engineer.

I went to elementary school on the Navajo reservation in Arizona where we lived. After my mom died, we were sent to live at a boarding school nearby in Fort Defiance, Arizona. When that school closed, we were sent to live at another boarding school, this one in Albuquerque, New Mexico. So, from the fourth grade through high school, I went to the public boarding schools in Albuquerque. After high school graduation, I went to the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, New Mexico, and got my bachelor of science degree in mining engineering.

While you are in elementary, junior high and high school, make it your goal to go to college.

I was so un-informed while in high school that I did not think any college would want me. My high school counselor convinced me I was college material. She was also the one who was my sounding board when things happened to me that I felt I could not handle. Since I did not realize until late in my high school career that I needed to go to college, I was not prepared to go into engineering. My first year of college I had to take all the basic classes (math, chemistry, physics) to get myself prepared for the engineering classes. To me the whole five years of college were fairly difficult, and I was very lucky to have smart friends who were willing to help me.

I think my junior high and high school teachers could have done a better job in getting me prepared. I had some very good teachers, but I also got bored in some of my classes. I was given the impression during most of my school years that I would not be able to go to college because I was an Indian, and "Indians do not go to college." The other thing I did not realize was that there are scholarships out there for people like me (minorities). In fact, I was so naive that I thought I would personally have to pay for all of my college education.

While you are in elementary, junior high and high school, make it your goal to go to college. Do not worry too much about what it is you are going to major in, think about what you like to do (for example, do you like to talk to people, do you like to work alone, do you like math, do you like to write). Answer these questions about yourself and then find out what kind of jobs there are that would fit your style. Find people who do the type of work or have the type of career that interests you. Talk to these people and find out what they actually do while on the job and what they had to do to get their jobs (for example, college education, trade school). Most people are really willing to help, so never be afraid to ask for help or advice.

There is still that perception that men are better at engineering and math than women. So no matter how much schooling women have had or what kind of degree we have, we still have to work twice as hard...I am a determined person, and once I want to do something there is very little that anyone can do to make me change my mind.

I do long-range planning for a large surface coal mining operation in northern New Mexico. The Navajo mine currently has three large draglines in operation for stripping dirt off the coal. BHP (the company I work for) recently bought a used dragline, and we are in the process of having it put together here on the mine site. Therefore, my current project is to find the most economical method of mining for the two machines that will be in operation once this dragline is up and running. Finding the most economical mining method requires looking at our reserves for all the mining

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Minority Women - continued from page 5

areas on our lease. We then figure out what would be the best way to mine these areas to maintain the amount and grade of coal required from us for the power plant. After the best mining option is selected, we do detailed designs and plans on how the draglines will uncover each coal seam. We then determine the amount of time it would take to mine and to haul the coal out of each pit. From this figure, we can plan what the years ahead will look like for quality and quantity of coal for each year. We can simulate what the earth will look like after we finish mining, in order to plan for reclamation. We even determine what our staffing levels should be for the life of the mine. Almost all of this work is done on computers using various mine-modeling programs.

What I love most about my job is being able to design something and then see it actually created out in the field. I guess it is like seeing it done in your mind, then on the computer and then actually watching the equipment moving the dirt.

Some barriers I have encountered in the work place are that people, both men and women, do not seem to take me as seriously as they would one of my male counterparts. If the project involves more than one engineer, people always seem to think it is the other guy who did most of the work or came up with all the ideas. Since my father always told me it was not right to talk highly of yourself, it is very difficult for me to claim recognition for myself. To get up and say "I did that part of the project" is still very hard. In my heart and in my mind I know that I was the one responsible for the idea or the work, so the glory is not the most important thing to me. We all have our own consciences to live with. What matters most to me is to know I did the job and to feel good about my work.

The Navajo Nation in general has been supportive of my pursuit of science. I started college when the Navajo Nation was very vocal about the need for Navajo students to earn college degrees. The Navajo Nation still says we need the people with the degrees, but, in my opinion, it is no longer one of the highest priorities for the tribe. It needs to be higher on the list of priorities for the Navajo Nation, and more efforts need to be made to prepare Navajos for college and to keep them in college. This is essential for our personal survival and for the survival of our tribe.

There is still that perception that men are better at engineering and math than women. So no matter how much schooling women have had or what kind of degree we have, we still have to work twice as hard to get on even ground with the average Anglo male. This is especially true if you are a minority woman in a predominately male field. I am a determined person, and once I want to do something there is very little that anyone can do to make me change my mind. I have overcome most obstacles by telling myself, "This is what I want to do, so I'm going to do it."

Whatever it is you want to accomplish, you will be able to do it with persistence and hard work. Do not hold back, do not be shy, do not be timid, do not set limits for yourself and do not let others tell you what they think your limits are. Prepare yourself so that you can use your knowledge to help yourself and your people.

I was the first mining engineer for the Navajo Nation. I have always tried to keep this as low-key as possible because being the first was not my goal when I started out. In fact, I have been many "firsts" along the way, and I felt it was more of a hindrance than a help for quite a while. I think the fact that I opened a door or two for many of my people is a greater accomplishment than being first. I have met some people who have told me they heard me speak many years ago and it gave them the push they needed for going into science or even going to college. These are the people that make me feel good about getting my degree and make me feel like I have done something to help them.

Mining Minerals in the Classroom

consumption:	the process or act of using a mineral that has been mined.
inorganic:	the quality of being composed of material other than plant or animal, belonging to the inanimate world.
lode:	an ore deposit. It usually refers to a seam or vein of ore that will be mined as a unit.
mine:	a spot or pit in the earth from which minerals can be taken.
mineral:	an inorganic substance that is neither animal nor vegetable. Also a solid crystalline element or compound that results from an inorganic process of nature.
ore:	the source from which a mineral can be taken (extracted). The mineral can be either metallic (gold) or non-metallic (sulfur).
reclamation:	restoring a mine to beneficial use, facilitating the recovery of land that has been mined.
resource:	a source of support or supply that can be used to serve a purpose.
seam:	a bed of valuable mineral (especially coal), regardless of thickness.
vein:	a mineral deposit that has definite boundaries that distinguish it from the surrounding rock. It usually appears as a thin layer that resembles a vein.
yield:	the amount or quantity of mineral that was or can be mined.

from "Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way – Student Workbook," Intercultural Development Research Association

This story was reprinted from "Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way – Student Workbook" published by IDRA (see next page).

Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and Maria Aurora Yánez, M.A.

A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

We must ensure that minority girls are not left behind as progress is made toward narrowing gender and racial gaps in math and science education. This is an innovative resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists.

You will find:

- Profiles of seven minority women scientists who have surmounted barriers to forge the way for themselves and future scientists.
- Science lessons for the classroom that cover such topics as acid/base chemistry, earth science, wildlife and environmental science, and biology.
- Life skills lessons for the classroom that cover topics such as getting college information from the school counselor, identifying a support system, reaching goals, knowing self-worth, having community pride, overcoming stereotypes, and linking hobbies with career choices.
- The opportunity to use this guide to plan with other teachers, from other departments, using the stories of these inspirational women as the basis for cross-curricular lessons for students.

(**Student Workbook** ISBN 1-878550-67-5; 2000; 32 pages; paperback; $6.50)
(**Teacher's Guide** ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

Developed and distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210-444-1710;
Fax 210-444-1714; e-mail: contact@idra.org. *It is IDRA policy that all orders totalling less than $30 be pre-paid.*

"Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools

The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) has launched its annual *School Opening Alert* campaign to reaffirm the legal rights of all children who reside in the United States to attend public schools, regardless of immigration status. The fliers provide information for immigrant parents about the rights of their children to attend local public schools this fall. IDRA is working with NCAS to make this alert available. NCAS can also provide a camera-ready copy of the alert in English and Spanish to be reproduced and distributed by schools and community groups. The copy of the alert below and on the following page may be reproduced and used as well.

School Opening Alert

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202 (1982)] that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are required under state laws to attend school until they reach a legally mandated age.

As a result of the *Plyler* ruling, public schools ***may not***:

- deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status;
- treat a student differently to determine residency;
- engage in any practices to "chill" the right of access to school;
- require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status;
- make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status; or
- require social security numbers from all students, as this may expose undocumented status.

Students without social security numbers should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program for a student need only state on the application that they do not have a social security number.

Recent changes in the F-1 (student) Visa Program ***do not*** change the *Plyler* rights of undocumented children. These changes apply only to students who apply for a student visa from outside the United States and are currently in the United States on an F-1 visa.

Also, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits schools from providing any outside agency – ***including the Immigration and Naturalization Service*** – with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status without first getting permission from the student's parents. The only exception is if an agency gets a court order (subpoena) that parents can then challenge. Schools should note that even requesting such permission from parents might act to "chill" a student's *Plyler* rights.

Finally, school personnel – especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities – should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

For more information or to report incidents of school exclusion or delay, call:

NCAS	Nationwide	(800) 441-7192	(English/Spanish/French/German)
META	Nationwide	(617) 628-2226	(English/Spanish)
META	West Coast	(415) 546-6382	(English)
NY Immigration Hotline	Nationwide	(718) 899-4000	(English/Spanish/Chinese/French/Korean/Polish/Urdu/ Haitian Creole/Hindi/Japanese/Russian)
MALDEF – Los Angeles	Southwest/ Southeast	(213) 629-2512	(English/Spanish)
MALDEF – San Francisco	Northwest	(415) 546-6382	(English/Spanish)
MALDEF – Chicago	Illinois	(312) 782-1422	(English/Spanish)
MALDEF – San Antonio	Southwest	(210) 224-5476	(English/Spanish)
Florida Parent Hotline	Florida	(800) 206-8956	(English/Spanish/Haitian Creole)

Please copy and distribute this flier.

This flier is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Hmong at 1-800-441-7192 or http://www.ncas1.org/alert.htm)

National Coalition of Advocates for Students *100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116*

Llamada Urgente al Comienzo del Curso Escolar

En 1982, El Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos dictaminó en el caso *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202] que los niños y los jóvenes indocumentados tienen el mismo derecho de asistir a las escuelas públicas primarias y secundarias que tienen sus contrapartes de nacionalidad estadounidense. Al igual que los demás niños, los estudiantes indocumentados están obligados a asistir a la escuela hasta que llegan a la edad exigida por la ley.

A raíz de la decisión *Plyler*, las escuelas públicas **no pueden**:

- negarle la matrícula a un estudiante basándose en su situación legal y/o inmigratoria, ya sea a principios del curso o durante cualquier otro momento del año escolar;
- tratar a un estudiante en forma desigual para verificar su situación de residencia;
- efectuar prácticas cuyo resultado sea obstruir el derecho de acceso a los servicios escolares;
- requerir que un estudiante o sus padres revelen o documenten su situación inmigratoria;
- hacer interrogatorios a estudiantes o padres que pudieran revelar su situación de indocumentados;
- exigir que un estudiante obtenga un número de seguro social como requisito de admisión a la escuela.

La escuela debe de asignar un número de identificación a los estudiantes que no tienen tarjeta de seguro social. Los adultos sin números de seguro social quienes están solicitando que a un estudiante lo admitan a un programa de almuerzo y/o desayuno gratis, sólo tienen que indicar que no tienen seguro social en el formulario.

Los últimos cambios del Programa de Visado F-1 (de estudiantes) ***no cambiarán*** las obligaciones antedichas en cuanto a los niños indocumentados. Se aplican sólo a los estudiantes que solicitan del extranjero un visado de estudiantes y que están actualmente en los Estados Unidos en un Visado F-1.

Además, el Acta Familiar de Derechos y Privacidad Escolar *(Family Education Rights and Privacy Act - FERPA)* le prohibe a las escuelas proveerle a cualquier agencia externa – ***incluyendo el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización*** *(Immigration and Naturalization Service –INS)* – cualquier información del archivo personal de un estudiante que pudiera revelar su estado legal sin haber obtenido permiso de los padres del estudiante. La única excepción es si una agencia obtiene una orden judicial – conocida como una citación o subpoena – que los padres pueden retar. Los oficiales escolares deben estar conscientes de que el mero hecho de pedirle tal permiso a los padres podría impedir los derechos *Plyler* de un estudiante.

Finalmente, el personal escolar – especialmente los directores de las escuelas y los secretarios generales – deben saber que no están bajo ninguna obligación legal de poner en vigor las leyes de inmigración de los EE.UU.

Para más información, o para denunciar incidentes de exclusión escolar o retraso en la admisión a clases, favor de llamar a:

NCAS	Nacional	(800) 441-7192	(Inglés/Español)
META	Nacional	(617) 628-2226	(Inglés/Español)
META	California	(415) 546-6382	(Inglés)
NY Linea de Urgencia de Inmigracion	Nacional	(718) 899-4000	(Inglés/Español)
MALDEF	California	(213) 629-2512	(Inglés/Español)
MALDEF	Illinois	(312) 782-1422	(Inglés/Español)
MALDEF	Texas	(210) 224-5476	(Inglés/Español)
Florida Parent Hotline	Florida	(800) 206-8956	(Inglés/Español/Haitiano Criollo)

Favor de copiar y distribuir esta hoja informativa.

Esta información fue puesta al día en 8/99 y está disponible en inglés, español, haitiano criollo, portugués, vietnamita, y hmong (http://www.ncas1.org/alert.htm).

National Coalition of Advocates for Students *100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116*

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- Build peer support for change with high trust levels among varied stakeholders.
- Distribute responsibility and leadership with minimal bureaucracy and clear accountability.

In each community that is currently carrying out this model, a Leadership in Diversity team is guiding the process. As part of the model, IDRA has outlined a recommended make-up of representation on these teams that is one-third from each major category: higher education, kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools, and community members. For the higher education representation, all major aspects – teaching, administering and researching – should be represented as well as two-year and four-year institutions. For the K-12 school partners, central office, campus administrators, faculty and counselors should be represented as well as elementary, middle and high school levels. For the community representation, at least one-third of the team members should be from historically underserved Latino families with children in school. Some representatives can be college or university students who come from the community.

Relationships

The Leadership in Diversity process suggests steps that are consistent with the introduction and management of change within the participating institutions. Each site takes a series of planned steps that bring together various stakeholders and support individual and collective input from higher education, K-12 schools, community in creating a seamless educational pipeline for Latino students. Each stakeholder group speaks from its strengths, experiences and point of view. The process offers chronological steps in introducing and carrying out these changes and the relationships among the different stakeholders and sectors of the community.

One of the analyses suggested in the process is a relational map, or *sociogram*, that reveals the connections of influence and power within an institution in ways that the formal organizational chart might not show. This analysis is useful for the Leadership in Diversity team to develop practical strategies to institutionalize ways to increase academic access and success for Latino students.

Oanh H. Maroney described how the ENLACE initiative is progressing through

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Glossary for Leadership in Diversity

Community – A place that is an identifiable neighborhood or region, has physical boundaries, and is representative of the broader Latino population. At a minimum, this community is comprised of various stakeholders: one group is historically under served Latino families with children in school; other members are community-based organizations, the private sector, universities, public schools, civic organizations, faith-based groups, and potential funders and foundations – all of which serve or have the potential to serve the Latino population.

Partnership – The team shares a mutual resolve and commitment to make a difference for Latino students in education. All represented groups have equal status around the table. Participants agree to be open to different opinions and to other capacities and assets that can become part of the solution. This kind of relationship:

- capitalizes on previously unrecognized or underutilized assets and resources;
- collaboratively seeks solutions to problems and removal of barriers and has a mutual resolution to change;
- is initially among those already committed to the vision of the project and who also have the authority, respect and influence within their constituency – eventually the partnership brings in others who need more information and dialogue to become committed to the goals of the project;
- develops and instills processes for sustaining the dialogue, self-renewal and institutionalizing the new relationships; and
- causes the university to connect to "communities" that it has not previously connected with in a partnership previously not experienced.

Assets – Capacities inherent in individuals and communities that include skills they can put to work, abilities and talents they can share, experiences they have learned from, and interests and dreams they would like to pursue.

Asset Mapping (as used in ENLACE) – Asset mapping is a process for universities, schools and communities to value and capture within themselves the potential of their members to make a difference for students. Members and community residents identify and value their full potential and direct their capacities toward improving the academic access and achievement of Latino students. Asset mapping is an antidote to the deficit model and a tool for bringing to light and utilizing previously ignored strengths and capital. It is data collection used by the Leadership in Diversity team to make decisions and plan strategies.

– Intercultural Development Research Association

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Leadership in Diversity:

> Communities are being strengthened by the development of inclusive, interrelational partnerships where everyone is a stakeholder in the well-being of that community. It is anticipated that communities will see that the new entity being formed is stronger than all of its parts, and can look within themselves to determine how to capitalize on the strengths that each part of the community brings to bear. People are, in fact, willing to change the status quo – eager to make a difference (2000).

The challenges of this specific brand of "leadership in diversity" are great. We are not defining leadership as the individual qualities of assertiveness and ambition that shine through a charismatic individual. Leadership here means collective commitment to progress – wise and tough actions that create new systemic regularities in our institutions of higher education. It means constructing a seamless pipeline for all our children from pre-school years to completing college. It means making changes that are beneficial and sustainable. Families, communities, schools, colleges and universities are fulfilling the promise of democracy. It means institutions and communities and work for the greater good of our world.

Resources

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Supik, J.D. "Project Alianza – A Model

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Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In June and July, IDRA worked with **7,164** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **92** training and technical assistance activities and **250** program sites in **13** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) training
- Creating a Parent Involvement Plan
- Instructional Strategies for Reading
- San Antonio Community Education Leadership Program (CELP)

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Mora Public Schools, New Mexico
- Weslaco Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Communities In Schools
- Dallas Public Schools, Texas
- Woodward Public Schools, Oklahoma

Activity Snapshot

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is funding Project Alianza, a collaboration of IDRA and the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation to create a comprehensive and interdisciplinary teacher preparation and leadership development program to serve an increasing Hispanic student population in the U.S. Southwest and Midwest. The project is expanding the elementary education curricula at participating universities to enhance the abilities of teachers, parents, administrators, school board members and community leaders to collaborate effectively. It focuses on kindergarten through sixth grade teachers – grade levels where bilingual education is mostly offered and where there is a shortage of well-prepared teachers. Project Alianza is enabling universities to tap into three groups of individuals who possess the basic requirements of a prospective bilingual education teacher: bilingual teacher aides, students in traditional bilingual teacher-preparation programs, and teachers trained in Mexico to teach in their elementary grades (*normalistas*) and who are legal U.S. residents.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210/444-1710.

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Teacher Preparation and Leadership Development Initiative: First Year Findings," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, August 1999).

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Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., is the lead trainer in IDRA's Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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Upcoming Events

"Many Languages: One Voice"
Texas Association for Bilingual Education
Annual Conference

October 25 to 28, 2000
El Paso, Texas

For more information call 210-979-6390 or see www.tabe.org/confer/infocon.htm

"Facing the Future"
Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
State Conference

October 27 to 28, 2000
San Antonio, Texas

For more information call 210-458-5964 or see www.angelfire.com/tx4/textesol2

La Cosecha de Otono
Dual Language Conference

November 13 to 15, 2000
Albuquerque, New Mexico

For more information call 505-247-2798 or see www.dges.aps.edu

Ninth Annual IDRA
La Semana del Niño
Early Childhood Educators Institute™
Intercultural Development Research Association

April 24 to 26, 2001
San Antonio, Texas

For more information call 210-444-1710 or see www.idra.org

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

IDRA Focus:
Dropout Prevention

ISSN 1069-5672 *Volume XXVII, No. 9 October 2000*

TEA's School Leaver Codes: The Rest of the Story

Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

Inside this Issue:

- Latest attrition study results
- A model dropout prevention program
- Crossing the miles with video conferencing

"Most students who withdraw from a school district are reported to have simply transferred to another school and are not dropping out," claims the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in a June news release.

The agency released its second report on school leavers, *1997-98 and 1998-99 Returning and Non-Returning Students in Grades 7-12*. The report indicates that 98.9 percent of the students who had been enrolled or in attendance in grades seven through 12 in 1998-99 have been accounted for and that the lion's share of these students simply have enrolled in another school. According to the state education agency, other than graduates (10.9 percent) and dropouts (1.6 percent), 59.7 percent of the students who left school in 1998-99 simply transferred to another school in Texas and 15.2 percent transferred to a school out-of-state.

But this is not the whole story.

Despite the agency's latest claims that its new school leaver system is accounting for the large number of students lost from enrollment, a review of the data casts serious concerns about the credibility of the state's dropout counting and reporting system. Most of the school leaver records only indicate a student's *intention* to enroll in another school. Records are not verified.

The Texas school accountability system has been touted by some as a model for other states and has been viewed skeptically by others. But there is little doubt that one of the weaknesses of the system is the credibility of the state's counting and reporting of dropouts. Many people inside and outside of Texas question the 1.6 percent annual dropout rate reported by TEA. (See the box on Page 15 for TEA dropout counts for the 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99 school years.)

School Leaver Codes: One Side of the Story

Beginning in the 1997-98 school year, Texas school districts have been required to report the reasons that students in grades seven through 12 leave school. In the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) submission each year (October), school districts must report information on every student enrolled in these grade levels using the following choices: (1) the student is enrolled during the current school year, or (2) the student is a leaver and must then be reported on the "leaver record" with at least one departure reason for that student.

During the 1997-98 school year, 37 leaver codes were available to describe the reasons students left school, compared to 41 leaver codes for the following school year. Prior to the collection of these school leaver data, school districts were required to report information on returning students, graduates and dropouts using 22 codes. (See the box on Page 16 for dropout and leaver codes used in the 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99 school years.)

TEA lists the major findings of the latest school leaver report as follows:

- School districts submitted 1,875,234

TEA's Leaver Codes - continued on page 2

TEA's Leaver Code - continued from page 1

student records for re-enrolled students, graduates, dropouts, and other leavers.

- School districts could account for 98.9 percent of the students who had been enrolled or were in attendance in grades seven through 12 in 1998-99.
- Only 1.1 percent of students enrolled or in attendance in grades seven through 12 were under-reported (could not be accounted for), down from 3.6 percent the previous school year.
- School districts could not account for 21,432 students in 1998-99, compared to 67,841 in 1997-98.
- Exit reasons were available for 267,503 *other leavers*. Districts' reported exit reasons included:
  - 59.7 percent transferred to other Texas schools.
  - 15.2 percent transferred to schools outside Texas.
  - 7.4 percent enrolled in alternative programs.
  - 4.1 percent are home schooled.
  - 3.8 percent received a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.
  - 3.7 percent returned to their home country.
  - 2.9 percent enrolled in a private school.
  - 1.9 percent were incarcerated.
  - 0.9 percent completed course requirements but did not pass the exit-level Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).
  - 0.3 percent died.
  - 0.2 percent enrolled in college.
- No school district had more than 1,000 under-reported student records in 1998-99 compared to nine school districts that did in 1997-98. Fifty-five school districts had more than 10 percent under-reported student records compared to 103 districts who failed to account for more than 10 percent of the students enrolled.
- The number of districts with no under-reported students increased to 317 in 1998-99 from 79 in 1997-98, a 301 percent increase.
- The number of over-reported student records decreased by 6,209 in 1998-99 from 27,558 in 1997-98, a 77 percent decrease.

Most of the school leaver records only indicate a student's intention to enroll in another school. Records are not verified.

Research and analyses by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) and others show that a large number of students are lost from public school enrollment each year. TEA's school leaver report presents a somewhat rosy picture of the whereabouts of these secondary students.

The Rest of the Story

TEA and IDRA estimates of the number and percent of dropouts were similar in the mid-1980s.

However, Dr. Maria "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director, reported recently to the Texas State Board of Education, "Unfortunately over the years, the state has pursued a course of trying to define away the dropout numbers – rather than actually decreasing the number of dropouts" (Robledo Montecel, 2000).

This summer, the *El Paso Times* conducted its own analysis and found that more than 20 percent of Texas students who were reported by TEA as having transferred to other schools in the state could not be verified (Reveles Acosta, 2000). Of 155,867 students reported as state transfers in 1998-99, 32,798 (21 percent) of these students could not be located through the PEIMS. Similar analyses for the 1997-98 school year showed that 33,404 (27 percent) students could not be located. These figures exceed the number of officially reported dropouts (about 26,000 each) of these school years.

Using a data file obtained from TEA's 1998-99 school leaver report, IDRA has conducted its own analysis of district self-reports on the reasons students leave

TEA's Leaver Codes - continued on page 15

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Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools: 1999-00 Study Results

Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

The percent of students lost from public high school enrollment prior to graduation has remained relatively unchanged over the past six years at or about 40 percent.

Attrition data provide the number and rate of students who drop out of high school. Each year since 1995-96, two of every five students from a freshman class has left school prior to their graduation from a Texas public high school.

Research from the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) shows that between 1985-86 and 1999-00 about 1.5 million secondary students have been lost from public school enrollment in Texas. The statewide attrition rate has ranged from a low of 31 percent in 1988-89 and 1989-90 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97. On the average, nearly 115,000 students do not graduate each year, costing the state in excess of $319 billion (Robledo Montecel, 1999; Supik and Johnson, 1999).

The latest IDRA attrition study, completed in October 2000, reflects that two of every five students (40 percent) of the freshman (ninth grade) class of 1996-97 left school prior to high school graduation in 1999-00. An estimated 146,714 students were lost from enrollment due to attrition.

In 1986, IDRA conducted Texas' first comprehensive statewide study of high school dropouts. Using a high school attrition formula, IDRA found that 86,276 students had not graduated from Texas high schools that year, costing the state $17 billion in forgone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs (Cárdenas, Robledo and Supik, 1986). IDRA's latest study spans a 15-year time period from 1985-86 through 1999-00 and documents the number and percent of students who leave school prior to graduation. IDRA is the only organization to annually compute attrition rates and is the only state-level group that does so using *consistent* definitions and calculation methods (Robledo Montecel, 2000).

IDRA used high school enrollment data from the Fall Membership Survey of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to compute countywide and statewide attrition rates by race-ethnicity and sex. The enrollment data from special school districts (military schools, state schools, and charter schools) were excluded from the analyses since they are likely to have unstable enrollments and/or lack a tax base to support school programs.

During the fall of each year, school districts are required to report information to TEA via the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) for all students and grade levels. IDRA's attrition studies involve the analysis of ninth grade enrollment figures and 12th grade enrollment figures three years later. This period represents the time span during which a ninth grade student would be enrolled in high school prior to graduation.

Historical Attrition Data

Longitudinal statewide attrition rates are categorized by race and ethnicity on Page 4. General conclusions follow.

The annual attrition rate has increased by 21 percent from 1985-86 to 1999-00. Over the past 15 years, attrition rates have fluctuated between 31 percent and 43 percent. However, there has been an upward trend in attrition rates over the period, from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 40 percent in 1999-00. The percentage of students who have left school prior to graduation has increased by 21.2 percent from 1985-86 to 1999-00.

Numerically, 146,714 students were lost from public high school enrollment during the period of 1996-97 to 1999-00 as compared to 86,272 during the period of 1982-83 to 1985-86. From 1998-99 to 1999-00, the attrition rate declined by 4.7 percent, from 42 percent to 40 percent.

Attrition Rates - continued on page 4

Did You Know?

Over 3.9 million of 16- through 24-year-olds in the United States (11.8 percent) were not enrolled and had not completed high school in October 1998.

– National Center for Education Statistics, 1999

During the past 15 years, the annual attrition rate in Texas has increased by 21 percent. There has been an upward trend in attrition rates from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 40 percent in 1999-00.

– Intercultural Development Research Association, 2000

Hispanic students and Black students have had considerably higher attrition rates than White students. In 1999-00, Hispanic students had an attrition rate of 52 percent compared to 47 percent for Black students and 28 percent for White students.

– Intercultural Development Research Association, 2000

The estimated net loss in revenues and related costs to the state of Texas continues to escalate. In 1986, the issue of school dropouts was costing the state $17 billion in foregone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs. By 1998, 12 years later, the estimated costs were $319 billion.

– Intercultural Development Research Association, 2000

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

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Longitudinal Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools, 1985-86 to 1999-00

Race-Ethnicity Group	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1991-92	1992-93	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	Percent Change* From 1985-86 to 1999-00
Native American	45	39	37	47	39	40	39	42	44	43	42	25	43	-4
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	30	28	23	22	21	21	18	18	20	21	19	20	-39
Black	34	38	39	37	38	39	43	50	51	51	49	48	47	38
White	27	26	24	20	19	22	25	30	31	32	31	31	28	4
Hispanic	45	46	49	48	48	48	49	51	53	54	53	53	52	16
Total	**33**	**34**	**33**	**31**	**31**	**34**	**36**	**40**	**42**	**43**	**42**	**42**	**40**	**21**

* *Rounded to nearest whole number.* Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data.
Rates were not calculated for the 1990-91 and 1993-94 school years due to unavailability of data.

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Hispanic students and Black students have had considerably higher attrition rates than White students. Hispanic students are lost from enrollment at higher rates than either White students or Black students.

From 1985-86 to 1999-00, attrition rates for Hispanic students have increased 16 percent, from 45 percent to 52 percent. During this same period, the attrition rates for Black students have increased by 38 percent, from 34 percent to 47 percent. Attrition rates for White students have increased by 4 percent, from 27 percent in 1985-86 to 28 percent in 1999-00.

Over the 15-year period, Native American students and Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline in their attrition rates. Native American students had a 4 percent decline in their attrition rates, from 45 percent to 43 percent, while Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline of 39 percent, from 33 percent to 20 percent.

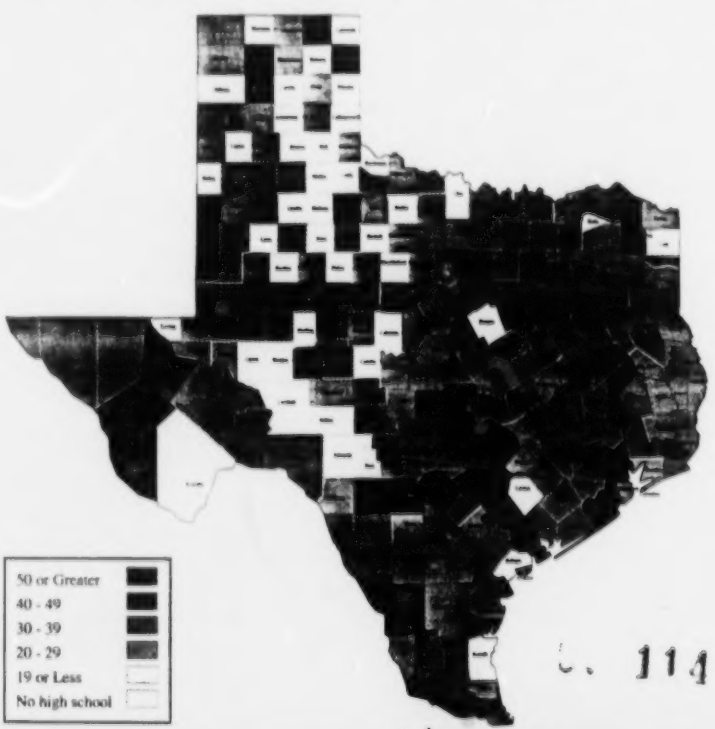
The longitudinal attrition rates for students who are Hispanic, Black or Native American have been typically higher than the overall attrition rates. Attrition rates for White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students have been typically lower than the overall attrition rates.

Hispanic students account for nearly half of the estimated 1.5 million students lost to attrition. For the period of 1985-86 to 1999-00, students from ethnic minority groups accounted for two-thirds of the estimated 1.5 million students lost from public high school enrollment. Hispanic students account for nearly half (47.6 percent) of all students lost from enrollment across the longitudinal period. Black students have accounted for 17.3 percent of all students lost due to attrition over the years, and White students have accounted for 33.7 percent of students lost from high school enrollment over time.

The attrition rates for males have been higher than those of females. Between 1985-86 and 1999-00, attrition rates for males have increased by 26 percent, from 35 percent to 44 percent. Attrition rates for females have increased by 13 percent, from 32 percent to 36 percent. Longitudinally, males have

Attrition Rates - continued on page 5

Attrition Rates by County, 1999-00



Attrition Rates - continued from page 4

accounted for 56.1 percent of students lost from school enrollment, while females have accounted for 43.9 percent.

Latest Attrition Results

The latest attrition study by IDRA shows that in Texas 52 percent of Hispanic students and 47 percent of Black students were lost from public school enrollment (compared to 28 percent of White students) between 1996-97 and 1999-00.

This study confirms findings in earlier reports that Hispanic students and Black students are at greater risk of being lost from high school enrollment prior to graduation than White students. Data from this study also show that males are more likely to be lost from enrollment than females. The overall attrition rate is 40 percent. Major findings of the 1999-00 attrition study include the following.

Two of every five high school students were lost from high school enrollment prior to graduation. Two of every five students enrolled in the ninth grade in Texas public schools during the 1996-97 school year failed to reach the 12th grade in 1999-00. An estimated 146,714 students, or about 40 percent of the 1996-97 freshman class, were lost from public school enrollment by 1999-00.

Hispanic students and Black students were more likely than White students to be lost from high school enrollment in 1999-00. Fifty-two percent of Hispanic students and 47 percent of Black students were lost from public school enrollment, compared to 28 percent of White students. Hispanic students were 1.9 times more likely than White students to leave school before graduation, while Black students were 1.7 times more likely than White students to leave school before completion.

From 1998-99 to 1999-00, three racial-ethnic groups had a decline in attrition rates. White students had a decline from 31 percent to 28 percent, Black students had a decline from 48 percent to 47 percent, and Hispanic students had a decline from 53 percent to 52 percent. Asian/Pacific Islander students had an increase from 19 percent to 20 percent.

Native American students had an increase from 25 percent to 43 percent.

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1996-97 and 1999-00 Enrollment and 1999-00 Attrition in Texas

Race-Ethnicity and Gender	1996-97 9th Grade Enrollment	1999-00 12th Grade Enrollment	1996-97 9-12th Grade Enrollment	1999-00 9-12th Grade Enrollment	1999-00 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Students Lost to Attrition	Attrition Rate
Native American	**806**	**530**	**2,356**	**2,735**	**936**	**406**	**43**
Male	406	257	1,188	1,368	468	211	45
Female	400	273	1,168	1,367	468	195	42
Asian/Pacific Islander	**7,665**	**7,078**	**27,134**	**31,318**	**8,849**	**1,771**	**20**
Male	4,091	3,630	13,934	16,161	4,745	1,115	23
Female	3,574	3,448	13,200	15,157	4,104	656	16
Black	**50,935**	**27,844**	**143,926**	**149,543**	**52,941**	**25,097**	**47**
Male	26,884	13,164	71,906	75,186	28,110	14,946	53
Female	24,051	14,680	72,020	74,357	24,831	10,151	41
White	**151,126**	**111,188**	**502,308**	**516,739**	**155,463**	**44,275**	**28**
Male	79,108	56,202	257,964	264,961	81,254	25,052	31
Female	72,018	54,986	244,344	251,778	74,209	19,223	26
Hispanic	**132,196**	**69,438**	**350,740**	**383,698**	**144,603**	**75,165**	**52**
Male	70,083	33,790	180,021	196,355	76,442	42,652	56
Female	62,113	35,648	170,719	187,343	68,161	32,513	48
All Groups	**342,728**	**216,078**	**1,026,464**	**1,084,033**	**362,792**	**146,714**	**40**
Male	180,572	107,043	525,013	554,031	191,019	83,976	44
Female	162,156	109,035	501,451	530,002	171,773	62,738	36

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data. IDRA's 1999-00 attrition study involved the analysis of enrollment figures for public high school students in the ninth grade during 1996-97 school year and enrollment figures for 12th grade students in 1999-00. This period represents the time span when ninth grade students would be enrolled in school prior to graduation. The enrollment data for special school districts (military schools, state schools, and charter schools) were excluded from the analyses since they are likely to have unstable enrollments and/or lack a tax base to support school programs.

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association.

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools:
By Race-Ethinicity, 1999-00

County Name	Attrition Rates[1] Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Anderson	48	30	68	38
Andrews	47	17	39	28
Angelina	16	25	45	26
Aransas	10	36	50	38
Archer	•	22	52	24
Armstrong	•	1	100	11
Atascosa	**	22	35	30
Austin	44	22	63	33
Bailey	**	**	42	16
Bandera	100	36	29	36
Bastrop	58	36	67	48
Baylor	66	7	63	17
Bee	28	25	45	38
Bell	37	28	48	34
Bexar	39	26	48	41
Blanco	0	31	43	34
Borden	•	**	**	**
Bosque	39	12	37	18
Bowie	39	23	54	29
Brazoria	48	38	61	45
Brazos	61	27	63	43
Brewster	•	14	24	18
Briscoe	•	**	55	17
Brooks	•	28	41	40
Brown	63	30	53	37
Burleson	50	29	55	38
Burnet	61	38	66	44
Caldwell	51	37	54	46
Calhoun	38	32	60	46
Callahan	•	27	42	29
Cameron	56	30	55	54
Camp	51	24	79	41
Carson	•	3	31	4
Cass	17	18	42	18
Castro	**	**	31	14
Chambers	18	27	41	29
Cherokee	35	24	58	32
Childress	16	17	50	25
Clay	50	10	46	12
Cochran	47	19	53	40
Coke	96	36	80	63
Coleman	10	12	34	16
Collin	39	26	53	30
Collingsworth	**	**	31	7
Colorado	41	16	71	36
Comal	40	28	56	37
Comanche	•	25	38	29
Concho	•	3	22	12
Cooke	49	31	71	36
Coryell	50	30	39	35
Cottle	67	**	46	17
Crane	11	20	27	25
Crockett		**	12	2
Crosby	14	6	18	14
Culberson	•	49	36	39
Dallam	•	21	43	27
Dallas	51	29	63	46
Dawson	33	13	37	28
Deaf Smith	37	8	40	31
Delta	4	8	70	9

County Name	Attrition Rates[1] Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Denton	41	36	57	39
Dewitt	42	23	52	34
Dickens	33	**	37	1
Dimmit	**	4	34	30
Donley	2	34	53	36
Duval	•	34	20	22
Eastland	84	26	33	29
Ector	49	27	48	39
Edwards	•	16	18	17
Ellis	38	32	52	37
El Paso	35	22	41	38
Erath	73	27	48	32
Falls	32	35	53	38
Fannin	45	21	8	22
Fayette	42	15	64	26
Fisher	69	**	37	15
Floyd	17	20	42	33
Foard	•	20	62	36
Fort Bend	41	29	55	38
Franklin	31	18	77	24
Freestone	21	29	63	31
Frio	•	**	31	27
Gaines	43	22	45	35
Galveston	42	34	54	38
Garza	36	12	47	30
Gillespie	60	28	66	38
Glasscock	•	19	48	32
Goliad	**	19	57	29
Gonzales	39	25	55	41
Gray	3	16	42	21
Grayson	46	30	53	33
Gregg	42	27	60	33
Grimes	41	33	47	38
Guadalupe	54	33	55	44
Hale	44	22	44	36
Hall	**	8	24	12
Hamilton	•	27	61	32
Hansford	•	2	57	23
Hardeman	**	3	56	16
Hardin	21	23	34	23
Harris	54	29	61	47
Harrison	15	22	62	22
Hartley	•	14	85	29
Haskell	•	**	29	3
Hays	39	31	53	41
Hemphill	100	32	76	56
Henderson	27	28	55	30
Hidalgo		27	49	48
Hill	37	29	60	35
Hockley	36	11	43	28
Hood	**	33	50	34
Hopkins	34	22	40	24
Houston	56	24	72	39
Howard	58	25	51	37
Hudspeth	•	29	34	32
Hunt	53	31	62	37
Hutchinson	14	21	47	25
Irion	•	13	63	31
Jack	**	20	57	21
Jackson	42	22	46	31

[1] Calculated by: (1) dividing the high school enrollment in the end year by the high school enrollment in the base year; (2) multiplying the results from Calculation 1 by the ninth grade enrollment in the base year; (3) subtracting the results from Calculation 2 from the 12th grade enrollment in the end year; and (4) dividing the results of Calculation 3 by the result of Calculation 2. The attrition rate results (percentages) were rounded to the nearest whole number.

** = Attrition rate is less than zero (0).

• = The necessary data are unavailable to calculate the attrition rate.

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools:
By Race-Ethnicity, 1999-00 (continued)

County Name	Attrition Rates[1] Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Jasper	38	23	62	28
Jeff Davis	100	37	35	47
Jefferson	45	23	60	37
Jim Hogg	.	**	34	32
Jim Wells	**	8	35	30
Johnson	31	38	54	40
Jones	30	25	32	27
Karnes	57	10	36	28
Kaufman	53	36	57	41
Kendall	52	29	66	37
Kent	.	**	**	**
Kerr	76	33	68	45
Kimble	.	33	48	38
King	.	46	.	50
Kinney	40	17	35	29
Kleberg	56	22	47	42
Knox	24	16	27	21
Lamar	44	26	45	31
Lamb	25	13	40	29
Lampasas	65	27	54	35
La Salle	100	39	30	34
Lavaca	10	12	34	14
Lee	32	15	48	25
Leon	40	19	35	22
Liberty	36	37	59	39
Limestone	24	28	49	30
Lipscomb	.	5	40	12
Live Oak	.	18	32	26
Llano	.	44	66	46
Lubbock	37	16	39	27
Lynn	**	20	16	19
Madison	37	32	52	35
Marion	31	39	100	36
Martin	33	28	46	37
Mason	.	6	51	20
Matagorda	43	20	50	34
Maverick	.	43	34	34
McCulloch	**	14	50	28
McLennan	49	28	58	39
McMullen	.	16	29	21
Medina	100	23	51	40
Menard	.	40	38	39
Midland	39	16	48	30
Milam	48	24	56	36
Mills	.	25	25	24
Mitchell	31	35	57	38
Montague		22	31	23
Montgomery	31	35	57	38
Moore	85	25	52	40
Morris	42	33	35	35
Motley	.	**	100	6
Nacogdoches	42	26	62	35
Navarro	50	25	57	35
Newton	42	21	50	29
Nolan	39	21	43	31
Nueces	43	27	43	38
Ochiltree	.	38	55	44
Oldham	.	18	44	19
Orange	44	22	26	25
Palo Pinto	36	30	51	33
Panola	27	24	53	26
Parker	83	42	61	43
Parmer	100	13	30	23
Pecos	95	24	35	35
Polk	21	38	56	38
Potter	55	33	58	42
Presidio		22	52	51

County Name	Attrition Rates[1] Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Rains	49	31	29	32
Randall	30	21	46	25
Reagan	**	24	19	18
Real	.	17	5	11
Red River	24	24	67	67
Reeves	**	19	45	41
Refugio	2	**	31	15
Roberts	.	**	.	**
Robertson	25	29	40	29
Rockwall	42	32	49	34
Runnels	43	26	36	30
Rusk	32	26	42	29
Sabine	6	31	14	26
San Augustine	22	32	.	25
San Jacinto	61	55	65	57
San Patricio	54	35	50	44
San Saba	100	14	45	24
Schleicher	.	8	40	27
Scurry	37	15	40	24
Shackelford	.	14	25	16
Shelby	31	24	60	29
Sherman	.	4	45	18
Smith	44	29	69	39
Somervell	.	26	43	29
Starr	.	**	48	47
Stephens	**	25	49	29
Sterling	.	**	23	**
Stonewall	50	31	38	30
Sutton	**	6	17	12
Swisher	22	10	60	33
Tarrant	45	29	56	37
Taylor	45	28	54	36
Terrell	.	24	41	34
Terry	69	13	45	35
Throckmorton	.	29	20	27
Titus	46	36	62	46
Tom Green	39	18	49	33
Travis	58	33	65	49
Trinity	49	41	70	45
Tyler	24	21	25	21
Upshur	26	29	22	28
Upton	**	8	27	17
Uvalde	**	24	52	45
Val Verde	46	19	42	39
Van Zandt	59	31	60	35
Victoria	48	27	55	44
Walker	56	25	54	39
Waller	39	25	62	38
Ward	33	25	44	36
Washington	61	16	74	37
Webb	73	32	41	40
Wharton	41	12	48	31
Wheeler	.	8	44	13
Wichita	45	32	59	38
Wilbarger	22	21	47	28
Willacy	11	2	42	39
Williamson	59	32	53	37
Wilson	64	19	50	33
Winkler	.	19	41	30
Wise	64	30	45	32
Wood	5	27	48	27
Yoakum	3	15	53	37
Young	33	14	50	21
Zapata	.	20	26	25
Zavala	**	**	37	35
Total	**47**	**28**	**52**	**40**

Attrition Rates - continued from page 5

following a significant decline from 42 percent to 25 percent the previous school year. The fluctuation in Native American attrition rates over the past two years can be attributed to its small population size.

More than half of the students lost from enrollment were Hispanic. Hispanic students made up the highest percentage of students lost from public high school enrollment in 1999-00. Over half (51.2 percent) of the students lost from school enrollment were Hispanic. White students comprised 30.2 percent of the students lost from enrollment, and Black students comprised 17.1 percent.

Males were more likely to be lost from enrollment than females. Between 1996-97 and 1999-00, 44 percent of males were lost from public high school enrollment, compared to 36 percent of females.

Overall, there has been a 21 percent increase in the attrition rate since 1985-86. The percent of students lost from public high school enrollment has increased by 21.2 percent between the 1985-86 school year (33 percent) and the 1999-00 school year (40 percent). The number of students lost through attrition per school year has increased from about 86,000 in 1985-86 to about 147,000 in 1999-00.

Enrollment and attrition data for the 1996-97 and 1999-00 school years are *categorized* by race and ethnicity in the box on Page 5. Statewide and county attrition rates are presented for the three major race and ethnicity groups in the state on Pages 6 and 7. The map on Page 4 displays the distribution of 1999-00 attrition rates by county in Texas. Seven counties had overall attrition rates of 50 percent or greater.

Texas Education Agency Reported Dropout Rates

Published reports by IDRA and TEA reach markedly difference conclusions about the number and percent of students who do not graduate from Texas public high schools. IDRA attrition analyses show that the number and percent of students lost has increased since the mid-1980s. Conversely, TEA estimates indicate that dropout rates have declined steadily during this same period.

IDRA executive director, Dr. Maria Robledo Montecel summarizes: "In the mid 1980s, IDRA and official TEA estimates of the number and percentage of dropouts were very similar... As the agency's dropout estimates have declined over the last decade, so has the credibility of its dropout reporting" (2000).

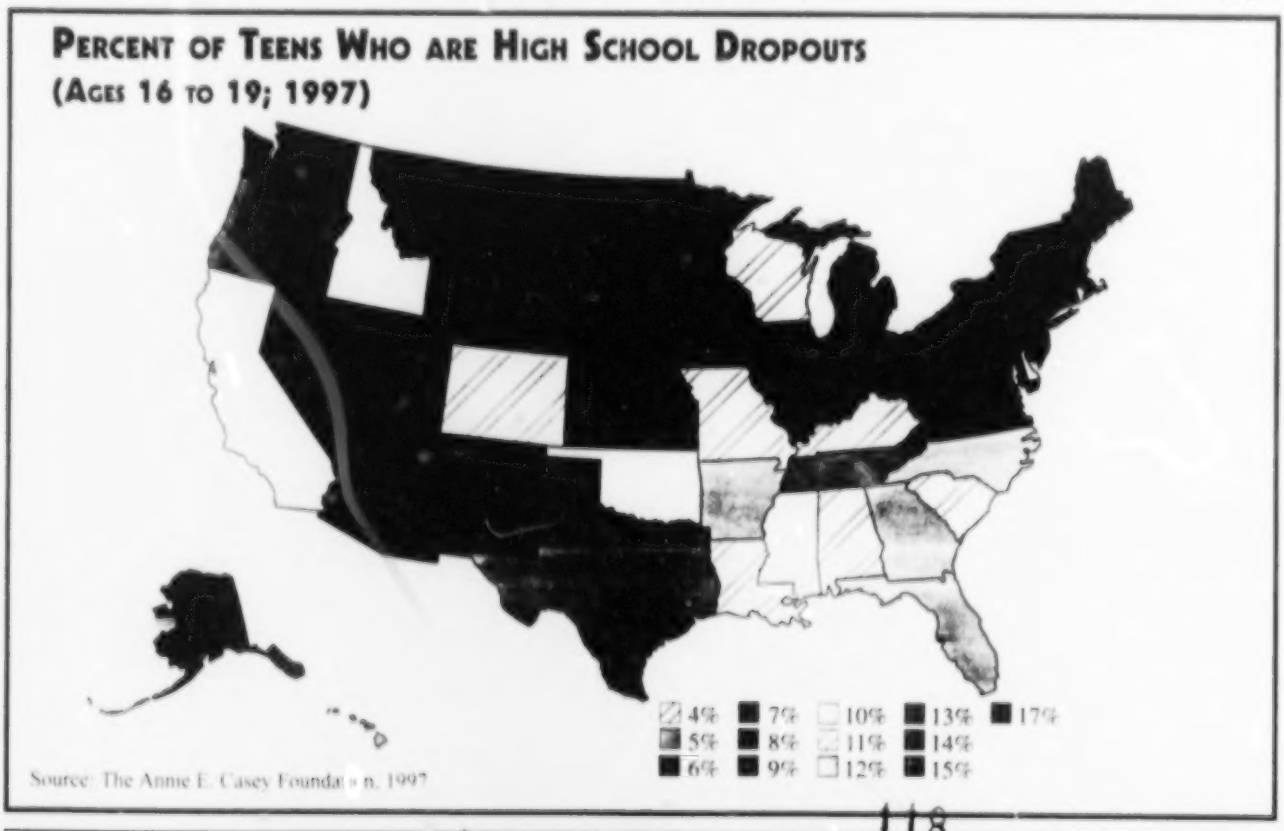
For the 1997-98 school year, TEA reported a 1.6 percent annual (event) dropout rate, a 14.7 percent actual longitudinal rate (grades 7-12) and a 36 percent attrition rate (grades 9-12). For the 1997-98 school year, IDRA showed a 42 percent attrition rate. (See the graph on Page 9 for a comparison of attrition and state dropout data.)

National and State Dropout Rates

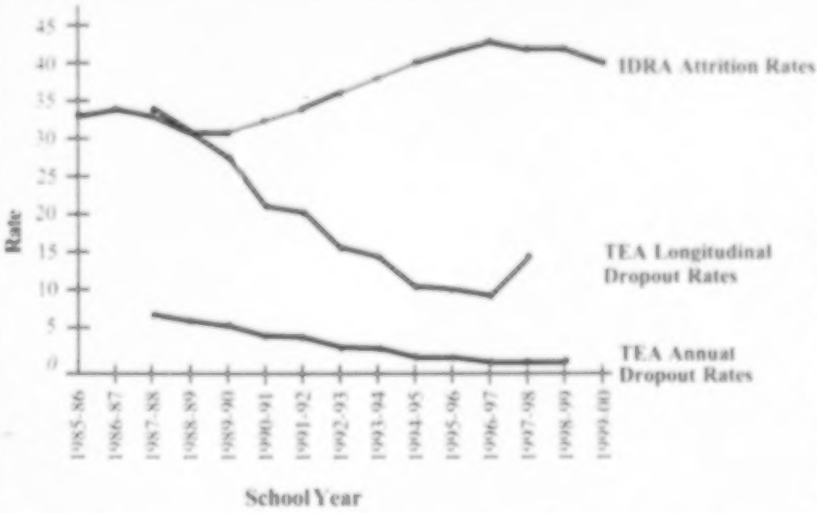
In 1998, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported an annual (event) dropout rate of 4.8 percent, a status dropout rate of 11.8 percent, and a high school completion rate of 84.8 percent for the United States (based on the states that submitted state-level data). NCES used data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) of the U.S. Census Bureau to compute national high school dropout and completion rates by various background characteristics as sex, race-ethnicity, family income, and region of the country (NCES, 1999).

In its 1998 report, NCES concluded that dropout rates have fluctuated over the past quarter of the century with an overall downward trend (see box on Page 9). NCES

Attrition Rates - continued on page 9



Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time



	IDRA Attrition Rates	TEA Long. Dropout Rates	TEA Annual Dropout Rates
1985-86	33	--	--
1986-87	34	--	--
1987-88	33	34.0	6.7
1988-89	31	31.3	6.1
1989-90	31	27.2	5.1
1990-91	*	21.4	3.9
1991-92	34	20.7	3.8
1992-93	36	15.8	2.8
1993-94	*	14.4	2.6
1994-95	40	10.6	1.8
1995-96	42	10.1	1.8
1996-97	43	9.1	1.6
1997-98	42	14.7	1.6
1998-99	42	--	1.6
1999-00	40	--	--

* *Rates were not calculated for the 1990-91 and 1993-94 school years due to unavailability of data.*

Attrition Rates *- continued from page 8*

further concluded that Hispanic students and Black students are at greater risk of dropping out than are White students and that the percentage of students who dropped out of school each year is relatively unchanged. According to the report, high school completion rates have shown limited gains in the last quarter of a century.

NCES is working with state education agencies and school districts across the country, through the National Cooperative for Elementary and Secondary Statistics and the Common Core Data collection, to develop a national database of public school dropout rates. The number of participating states using consistent data definitions and collection procedures has increased from 14 in 1991-92 to 26 in 1996-97. In 1996-97, 38 states including the District of Columbia presented event dropout data.

In 1996-97, Texas had a national comparison annual dropout rate of 3.6 percent. This rate was higher than the 1.6 percent reported by TEA in its annual state report for that year, primarily due to dropout definitions and calculation methodologies. A state comparison of the percent of teens who are high school dropouts is presented in the box on Page 8.

Conclusions

Several conclusions may be drawn from IDRA's latest attrition study.

- High school dropouts continues to be a major problem in Texas and the United States as a whole. A significant number and percent of students are lost from high school enrollment prior to graduation.
- The estimated net loss in revenues and related costs to the state of Texas continues to escalate. In 1986, IDRA estimated that the issue of school dropouts was costing the state $17.12 billion in foregone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs. By 1998, 12 years later, the

Attrition Rates *- continued on page 10*

National Dropout Completion Rates in the U.S. by Race-Ethnicity, October 1998

Measure	Total	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander
Event (Annual) Dropout Rate (percentage of youth ages 15 to 24 who dropped out of grades 10 to 12, October 1997 to October 1998)	4.8	3.9	5.2	9.4	--
Status Dropout Rate (percentage of youth ages 16 to 24 who were dropouts in 1998)	11.8	7.7	13.8	29.5	4.1
Completion Rate (percentage of youth age 18 to 24 who were high school completers in 1998)	84.8	90.2	81.4	62.8	94.2

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1998.

Attrition Rates - continued from page 9

estimated costs were $319 billion.

- The annual attrition rate in Texas public high schools has increased by 21 percent from 1985-86 to 1999-00. Longitudinally, overall attrition rates have ranged from 31 percent to 43 percent.
- Hispanic students and Black students have had considerably higher attrition rates than White students. In 1999-00, Hispanic students had an attrition rate of 52 percent compared to 47 percent for Black students and 28 percent for White students.
- The credibility of official TEA estimates of the number and percentage of dropouts are in question. IDRA and NCES data show that dropout rates in the state of Texas are higher than those reported by the state education agency.
- The existing state dropout reporting system needs to be restructured. The state definition for dropouts needs to be amended and simplified. The state goal should be that *all* students remain in school and graduate with a high school diploma. Each school district should establish an oversight committee or taskforce to systematically monitor dropout counting and reporting efforts.
- The goal of reducing the dropout rate should be to increase the number and percentage of students graduating with a high school diploma.

While IDRA will continue to compile attrition data for the state, it is critical that the people of Texas, including its policymakers, make this issue a priority. Far too many Texas students are leaving our schools without ever earning their high school diplomas. One student lost is too many.

Resources

Cárdenas, J., M. Robledo and J. Supik. *Texas School Dropout Survey Project: A Summary of Findings* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).

National Center for Education Statistics. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1998* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, November 1999).

Robledo Montecel, M. *Texas School Dropout Counting and Reporting – A Need for Credibility*, written testimony to the Texas State Board of Education (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 2000).

Robledo Montecel, M. *$319 Billion and 1.2 Million Students Lost*, remarks to the Texas State Board of Education, Committee on Planning (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1999).

Supik, J. and R. Johnson. *Missing: Texas Youth: Dropout and Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1989).

Ros L. Johnson, M.S., is the director of the IDRA Division of Evaluation Research. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In August, IDRA worked with **7,789** teachers, administrators, parents higher education personnel through **48** training and technical assistance activities and **250** program sites in **13** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- ENLACE Initiative Second Networking Conference
- Planning for Bilingual Education and Community Involvement
- Using Assessment to Inform Instruction
- Reading Comprehension Strategies
- *Multicultural Education: An Overview for Practitioners*

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Taos Public Schools, New Mexico
- Harlandale Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Iberville Parish Public Schools, Louisiana
- Texas Education Service Center, Region XVIII
- Guymon Public Schools, Oklahoma

Activity Snapshot

The STAR Center has collaborated with several education service centers across Texas to provide training for teachers and administrators on coordinated funding. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. The sessions included the rationale for coordinating resources, a review of federal and state programs that can be coordinated in schoolwide programs, and a simulation of the coordination process using the STAR Center's innovative *Show Me the Money* game. The STAR Center is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210 444-1710.

IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – Model Dropout Prevention Program

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program began in 1984 based on the creed that all students are valuable, none is expendable. This philosophy, that all students are valuable, is helping schools keep 98 percent of Valued Youths in school, keeping these young people in the classroom and learning.

In this program, IDRA works with schools to identify students who are considered to be in an at-risk situation and place them as tutors of younger students. Participating tutors have been the ones who traditionally *receive* help; never have they been asked to *provide* help. These were the "throwaways," students who were not expected ever to graduate from high school. Yet, when given the appropriate structure, they can and do succeed. This program has made a visible difference in the lives of more than 95,000 children, families and educators.

The "valued youth" philosophy incorporates a series of premises: learning, valuing, contributing, participating, excelling, including and supporting. There are seven tenets to this philosopny (see box). The key to the program's success is in valuing students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and sustaining their efforts with effective, coordinated strategies.

The program is flexible – readily adaptable to individual schools – but careful design and assessment have shown that certain elements are critical. When a school becomes part of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, the school agrees to implement critical elements and to adapt other elements based on local circumstances.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program incorporates rigorous research and evaluation to identify the essential elements of the program, monitor program operations, develop corrective action, and document results.

Almost 9,000 Valued Youth have gone through the program. Tutors improve their grades, they show up in school more often and in the principal's office less often, and they stay in school. The program has maintained a less than 2 percent dropout rate for the last decade. The program also benefits families by increased communication with schools and renewed family pride.

One tutor, Marcos, testified before a congressional committee last year. He said that after being in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, he cares about school, and he respects his teachers. He also told of one night when he saw one of his first grade tutees on the playground by himself at about 8:00. Marcos took him to eat and then took him home. Marcos said, "I was worried that he was out there by himself and thought it was my responsibility to help him."

Another tutor told us he is saving his wages from the program to purchase a headstone for his mother. She died recently, and there is no other way his family would be able to afford a headstone.

In addition, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program succeeds because it subtly but powerfully challenges and ultimately changes people's beliefs and behaviors.

A philosopher once said, "The actual proves the possible." The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program works, as do other programs across the country based on valuing young people and their communities. All students can and are succeeding in some schools. It *can* happen in *every* school.

Excerpted from a presentation by Dr. Maria Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director, to the National Education Goals Panel Field Hearing in September.

IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – Philosophy

1. **All students can learn.** This means all students: of all colors, of all languages, of all backgrounds, with or without designer clothes. All students can learn.
2. **The school values all students.** There are no "throw-aways." There are no students who are not important. All students are valuable.
3. **All students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others.** Students are not passive vessels to which we give information. Not only are they active learners but they also can become teachers of others.
4. **All students, parents and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools.** We are all partners in this. We all participate.
5. **Excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement.** Our sense, our philosophy is that we are all "at risk" as long as students are "at risk." Different sectors in this country are realizing that. It is not only what happens to me as an individual when I drop out of school, it is what happens to *us*.
6. **Commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.** Excellence requires involving all of the players in deciding where we are going and how we are getting there and in monitoring how we are doing.
7. **Students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.** Each of these groups needs each other and must support each other.

Lessons Learned, Lessons Shared:
Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative

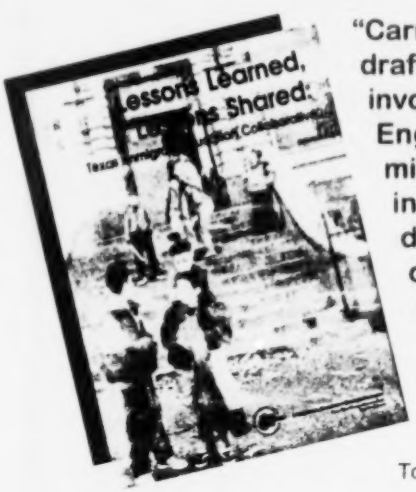
Pam McCollum, Ph.D.

Learn how to create an effective immigrant education program!

This publication shows educators what is necessary to develop and maintain appropriate programs for secondary level recent immigrant students.

Lessons Learned, Lessons Shared is divided into five main parts.

- ✓ A primer on the "basics" of immigrant education (i.e., demographics, legal issues, educational funding)
- ✓ Lessons learned through the TIEC at school sites, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- ✓ Four successful program initiatives: appropriate curriculum and instruction, a newcomers center, appropriate counseling and building linkages with the community.
- ✓ Future directions of recent-immigrant education
- ✓ Appendices of varied resources including
  - ✦Immigrant students' rights to attend public school
  - ✦Organizations devoted to immigrant issues
  - ✦Immigrant education
  - ✦Internet resources
  - ✦Immigrant terminology



"Carmen is my superstar. When she got into the technical drafting program last year, once I saw the terminology involved, I thought here is a young lady with very limited English proficiency – might even be dyslexic – who might be overwhelmed by this program. Carmen is an intern with the water company now, and one of her designs is actually being seriously considered for one of the new outlying developments being set up in El Paso County."

– Program Liaison
El Paso, Independent School District

To order, send a check or purchase order to: IDRA, 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190; fax 210/444-1714
(ISBN 1-878-550-66-7; paperback; 60 pages; $24.95)

Fulfilling a Commitment to Small, Rural and Remote Districts

Bradley Scott, M.A.

The Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE) has reached an important breakthrough in its technical assistance and training service delivery throughout the region. IDRA has begun to use video conference capability to deliver training and technical assistance to rural and remote areas of Oklahoma. The SCCE is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

In recent years, IDRA has amassed an impressive capacity to use video conferencing in several of its programs. Video conferencing is used to link students with students in the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program; colleges and universities in the ENLACE initiative; and educators, parents, and early childhood education advocates through the SCCE.

Specifically, the SCCE has been using video conferencing to deliver training during the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute for more than four years. In collaboration with the Texas Education Agency and the education service center network throughout the state, the SCCE has provided training to parents and educators in 16 of the 20 service center regions in simultaneous broadcasts during which 14 to 16 regions have been involved in a single statewide training session on a given topic. These sessions have been highly popular.

It was because of the success of these statewide training events that the SCCE decided to use this technology to extend its service delivery capacity to small, rural and remote areas throughout the region. A wonderful and most timely opportunity was presented in Oklahoma.

Last year, the Woodward Public School system called upon the SCCE to provide technical assistance for the staff of the district who were neither trained nor certified to provide appropriate educational opportunities to a growing population of students who are limited-English-proficient (LEP). The central administrative staff recognized that special and focused training would be required.

The SCCE established a long-term training plan with the district in which a core team of teachers from each of the campuses would be trained in a series of sessions that would prepare them to train their colleagues on their respective campuses. These sessions would aid the staff in providing more appropriate support for the students in question.

The SCCE was approached about the possibility of making this training available to other districts using the video conferencing capability that existed in the Woodward school system area and was supported through the Oklahoma State Department of Education's statewide network.

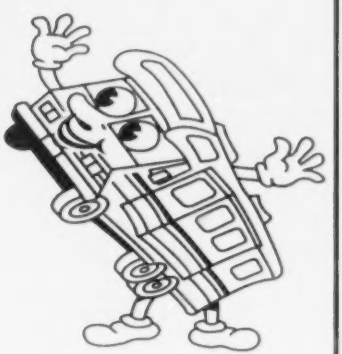
Guymon Public School in Oklahoma took advantage of the opportunity. The SCCE produced a needs assessment from the 14 educators who were involved in the session. As was anticipated, the session was very successful, and with the needs assessment, the stage was set for ongoing efforts to provide technical assistance and training through video conferencing.

This school year has opened with service delivery being provided directly to Guymon Public Schools using video conferencing with one addition. During the

Fulfilling a Commitment - continued on page 14

Take the *IDRA Newsletter* Field Trip!

Go on a "Field Trip" on IDRA's Web Site



- Related *IDRA Newsletter* articles and projects
- Statistics, definitions, etc.
- Internet resources
- Internet links

Register for a special prize!

Answer the question of the month!
Each month we will ask a new question for readers online. A sample of responses will be posted online.

This month's question is...

What are effective communication strategies for keeping the public aware of the good work you are doing on behalf of young people?

www.idra.org

Fulfilling a Commitment - continued from page 13
session that was held last year, representatives from Felt Public Schools also attended. They have similar needs and concerns as the Woodward and Guymon school systems. They made a special request for technical assistance. The district is small and remote. The expense of providing on-site sustained services would be prohibitively expensive. The perfect solution was to invite them to participate in the training being provided to the Guymon system through video conferencing. As of the publication of this article, plans are being made to bring them online for video conference technical assistance. One other remote district has expressed an interest in participating and will be included in the rural and remote service delivery effort that is underway.

Among the topics the participants will benefit from are:

- The legal aspects of serving bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) students;
- ESL teaching strategies for the classroom;
- Working with LEP students in secondary content area classes;
- The administrator's roles and responsibilities in serving ESL and bilingual students; and
- Using graphic organizers, cooperative learning and vocabulary builders with LEP students in content classes.

These sessions will occur for elementary and secondary school teachers at different times using the video conferencing capabilities available.

The SCCE is excited about the possibilities of this type of service delivery. It is not intended to replace the face-to-face, on-site assistance the SCCE provides. The on-site assistance becomes expensive given rising travel costs, rising requests from all parts of the region, and dwindling dollars to support service delivery. Video conferencing is intended to augment our capacity to serve all of our clients in more powerful ways while not depriving any district requesting such support because they are small, rural or remote.

Bradley Scott, M.A., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development and the director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Internet Web Sites on Dropout Prevention

K-12 Practitioners' Circle nces.ed.gov/practitioners
AmeriCorps www.cns.gov/americorps/index.html
America's Promise www.americaspromise.org
American Association of School Administrators www.aasa.org
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development www.ascd.org
Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org
Communities in Schools www.cisnet.org
Council of Chief State School Officers www.ccsso.org
Council of the Great City Schools www.cgcs.org
Center for Research on Students Placed at Risk scov.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/CReSPaR.html
Education Commission of the States www.ecs.org
Educational Testing Service www.ets.org
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities www.hacu.net
Intercultural Development Research Association www.idra.org
Kids Count Data www.acef.org/kidscount
National Coalition of Secondary School Principals www.nassp.org
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships www.edpartnerships.org
National Council of LaRaza www.nclr.org
National Dropout Prevention Center and Network www.dropoutprevention.org/
National Middle School Association www.nmsa.org
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.nicsl.coled.umn.edu
National Mentoring Partnership www.mentoring.org
National Research Council www.nas.edu/nrc
Public Education Network www.publiceducation.org
RAND www.rand.org
School City www.schoolcity.com
Think College, U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov/thinkcollege
U.S. Department of Education www.ed.gov
W.K. Kellogg Foundation www.wkkf.org

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

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TEA's Leaver Codes - continued from page 2

school. The data file, consisting of 260,638 student records, shows that districts reported as many as three reasons for some students (see the table on Page 17). Forty-eight percent or 126,135 of the 260,638 leaver records were reported as *unverified* transfers to other schools; that is students withdrew or left school with a "declared intent" to enroll in public school.

Only 6,181 of the 260,638 leaver records were coded as "official transfer to another Texas public school district." A further review of school leaver data shows that the vast majority of the school leaver records are unverified and reported only as "declared *intent* to enroll in another school" (emphasis added).

Recommendations for Improvement

In written testimony presented to the Texas State Board of Education in September, IDRA presented the following recommendations for making the state dropout counting and reporting system more credible, simple and clear.

Recommendation 1: The state should maintain the goal as stated in the Texas Education Code: "Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a high school diploma" (TEC Section 4.001).

Rationale: The goal of the state of Texas is simply and clearly that all students obtain a high school diploma. In Texas, *all* must mean *all*.

Recommendation 2: The state dropout definition should be amended and simplified by defining a dropout as a student whose re-enrollment or graduation from a high school (diploma-granting school) has not been verified.

Rationale: Much of the current confusion about actual dropout rates is created by the state's complex process for counting and reporting dropouts. The new school leaver data, with 41 student subcategories, has actually served to further complicate and muddle the process. A streamlined procedure is needed that informs us whether a student who was formerly enrolled in a Texas school actually re-enrolled, has graduated, has dropped out, or whose status is in reality unknown due to lack of verifiable information on actual re-enrollment. Current state reports indicate that the group of "unknown status students" accounts for over one-third of those reported as non-dropouts. Emerging data however, suggest that many of those same students actually never re-enroll in any school.

TEA received a request for verification of the re-enrollment of approximately 120,000 students whom the school leaver system identified as "re-enrolled in another Texas public school." In response, TEA was unable to account for more than 33,000 of those pupils. In fact, the number of students who disappeared from Texas schools is actually greater than the 26,000 dropouts "officially" reported by the agency in that year. This type of discrepancy weakens the credibility of the Texas dropout reporting system as well as its highly-touted school accountability system by incorporating these highly suspect dropout rates into the state's current accountability and school rating system.

Recommendation 3: The state should modify the state dropout reporting system to include fewer major categories, specifically the number of (a) students actually enrolled in a specific graduating class, (b) students in that class who are still enrolled in any public or private high school (diploma-granting institution) or who are verified as home schooled, (c) students known to have dropped out, (d) students who received a GED, and (e) students who completed all requirements but were denied a diploma for not passing the exit-level TAAS.

Rationale: Further confusion and related credibility of the existing state dropout reporting system can be attributed to the complexity that has been built into it by the state agency. With 41 student leaver codes, separating the number of pupils who actually received a regular high school diploma from the myriad of other reporting categories has rendered the new school leaver reporting system even less useful than the one it replaced. The cumbersome school leaver codes can be combined into several major categories that would provide a much clearer picture of students' statuses and enable anyone to calculate rates using these numbers. These new categories would include (a) students actually enrolled in a specified graduating class, (b) students in that class who are still enrolled in any public or private high school (diploma-granting institution) or who are verified as home schooled, (c) students known to have dropped out (this could include a subcategory of the number of students whose re-enrollment or high school graduation cannot be verified), (d) students who received a GED, and (e) students who

TEA's Leaver Codes - continued on page 17

Texas Education Agency Reported Dropout Rates, by Race-Ethnicity

School Year/Group	7-12th Grade Enrollment	Total Dropouts	Percent of Total Dropouts	Annual Dropout Rates	Estimated Longitudinal Dropout Rate
1996-97					
White	815,175	7,894	29.4%	1.0%	5.7%
African American	240,142	4,737	17.6%	2.0%	11.3%
Hispanic	603,067	13,859	51.5%	2.3%	13.0%
Other	47,588	411	1.5%	0.9%	5.1%
Total	**1,705,972**	**26,901**	**100.0%**	**1.6%**	**9.1%**
1997-98					
White	828,660	7,734	28.1%	0.9%	9.0%
African American	244,987	5,152	18.7%	2.1%	18.9%
Hispanic	619,855	14,127	51.3%	2.3%	20.4%
Other	49,637	537	1.9%	1.1%	7.6%
Total	**1,743,139**	**27,550**	**100.0%**	**1.6%**	**14.7%**
1998-99					
White	833,274	7,006	25.4%	0.8%	Not Available
African American	248,748	5,682	20.6%	2.3%	Not Available
Hispanic	638,041	14,413	52.2%	2.3%	Not Available
Other	53,054	491	1.8%	0.9%	Not Available
Total	**1,773,117**	**27,592**	**100.0%**	**1.6%**	**Not Available**

Source: Texas Education Agency, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)

PEIMS Leaver Codes Used in 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99

Leaver Reason		1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
	Code	Collected Type	Collected Type	Collected Type
Graduating	01	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate
Deceased	03		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew, documented enrollment elsewhere in Texas	05		Leaver	
Withdrew/left school, no declared intent, documented enrollment in Texas public school	73			Leaver
Withdrew/left school, no declared intent, documented enrollment in Texas private school	74			Leaver
Official transfer to another Texas public school district	21		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew, documented enrollment out of Texas	06		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew, declared intent to enroll out of state	07		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew/left school, declared intent to enroll in a public school	28		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew/left school, declared intent to enroll in a private school	29		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew, home schooling	60		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew/left school to enter college to pursue a degree	24	Dropout	Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew/left school, declared intent to enter health care facility	30		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew/ left school, documented return to home country	16	Dropout	Leaver	Leaver
Expelled for criminal behavior	17	Dropout	Leaver	Leaver
Incarcerated in a facility outside the boundaries of the district	61		Leaver	Leaver
Completed graduation requirements except for passing TAAS	19	Dropout	Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew, alternative programs toward completion of GED/diploma	22	Dropout	Leaver	Leaver
District has documented evidence of student completing GED	31		Leaver	Leaver
Received GED previously, returned to school, left again	64		Leaver	Leaver
Graduated previously, returned to school, left again	63		Leaver	Leaver
Removed by Child Protective Services	66		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrawn, failed to provide immunization records	67			Leaver
Withdrawn by court order for alternative program	72			Leaver
Withdrawn by school district for non-residence or falsified information	62		Leaver	Leaver
Withdrew/left school to pursue a job	02	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school to join the military	04	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school because of pregnancy	08	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school to marry	09	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school due to alcohol or other drug abuse problems	10	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school because of low or failing grades	11	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school because of poor attendance	12	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school because of language problems	13	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school because of age	14	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew/left school due to homelessness	15	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew to enroll in alternative program	23	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Withdrew for alternative program, not in compliance with compulsory attendance	70			Dropout
Withdrew for alternative program, in compliance with compulsory attendance, no documentation of completing high school or GED	71			Dropout
Withdrew/left school to enter college, no evidence of pursing degree	25	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Expelled for reasons other than criminal behavior	26	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Has not completed graduation requirements, did not pass TAAS	27	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Failed to re-enroll following JJAEN term	65	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout
Reason unknown	99	Dropout	Dropout	Dropout

126

Source: Texas Education Agency, *1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99, Returning and Non-Returning Students in Grades 7-12*, May 14, 1999 and June 9, 2000.

TEA's Leaver Codes - continued from page 15
completed all requirements but were denied a diploma for not passing the exit-level TAAS.

Much of the resistance to modifying dropout reporting procedures lies in the fact that schools and the state agency oppose reporting – as dropouts – students who have enrolled or indicated an intent to enroll in another public or private school but for whom no actual verification of enrollment is easily available. The creation of the "unknown" category allows for this distinction – without automatically assuming that these students actually re-enrolled at a subsequent school. Similarly, by accounting for GEDs in a separate category, the public can distinguish those students who get a high school diploma from those who completed a GED.

A final category would involve those students who have completed all requirements – but who failed to pass the exit-level TAAS. Such students are not reported either as dropouts or high school graduates in the current reporting system. As in the case of GED recipients, the new system would account for these students, further allowing for calculating of dropout and/or completion rates by combining or disaggregating the various subcategories.

Recommendation 4: The state should

TEA's Leaver Codes - continued on page 18

School Leaver/Exit Reason in Texas, 1998-99

Leaver Reason (Code)	First Reason		Second Reason		Third Reason		All Reasons	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Withdrew/left school, declared intent to enroll in public school (28)	126,135	48.4	38	22.1	7	41.2	126,180	48.4
Withdrew, declared intent to enroll out of state (07)	34,103	13.1	42	24.4	3	17.6	34,148	13.1
Withdrew, alternative programs toward completion of GED/diploma (22)	19,282	7.4	11	6.4	1	5.9	19,294	7.4
Withdrew/left school, no declared intent, documented enrollment in Texas public school (73)	19,282	7.4	2	1.2	0	0.0	19,284	7.4
Withdrew, home schooling (60)	10,738	4.1	12	7.0	0	0.0	10,750	4.1
Withdrew/left school, documented return to home country (16)	9,761	3.7	2	1.2	0	0.0	9,763	3.7
Withdrew/left school, declared intent to enroll in a private school (29)	7,682	2.9	13	7.6	4	23.5	7,699	3.0
District has documented evidence of student completing GED (31)	7,675	2.9	20	11.6	2	11.8	7,697	3.0
Official transfer to another Texas public school district (21)	6,181	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	6,181	2.4
Withdrew, documented enrollment out of Texas (06)	5,995	2.3	16	9.3	0	0.0	6,011	2.3
Incarcerated in a facility outside the boundaries of the district (61)	4,885	1.9	9	5.2	0	0.0	4,894	1.9
Completed graduation requirements except for passing TAAS (19)	2,220	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	2,220	0.9
Withdrawn by school district for non-residence or falsified information (62)	1,499	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,499	0.6
Withdrew/left school, declared intent to enter health care facility (30)	1,168	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,168	0.5
Withdrew/left school, no declared intent, documented enrollment in Texas private school (74)	862	0.3	1	0.6	0	0.0	863	0.3
Removed by Child Protective Services (66)	679	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	679	0.3
Deceased (03)	670	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	670	0.3
Received GED previously, returned to school, left again (64)	552	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	552	0.3
Expelled for criminal behavior (17)	489	0.2	5	2.9	0	0.0	494	0.2
Withdrew/left school to enter college to pursue a degree (24)	424	0.2	1	0.6	0	0.0	425	0.2
Withdrawn by court order for alternative program (72)	272	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	272	0.1
Graduated previously, returned to school, left again (63)	76	0.03	0	0.0	0	0.0	76	0.03
Withdrawn, failed to provide immunization records (67)	8	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	0.0
Total	**260,638**	**100**	**172**	**100**	**17**	**100**	**260,827**	**100**

Source: Texas Education Agency, *1997-98 and 1998-99 Returning and Non-Returning Students in Grades 7-12.*

TEA's Leaver Codes - continued from page 17

require that each school district establish local dropout oversight committee(s) or task force(s) including parent representatives, private sector representatives and school staff. These committees should regularly and systematically monitor the dropout identification, counting, and reporting process and dropout prevention efforts at their campuses and districts. Such efforts should be part of the regular school program involving regular school staff.

Rationale: There is currently no local oversight committee structure to monitor the local dropout reporting or intervention. Schools and communities must be directly involved in addressing the issue.

Summary

The need to significantly change the Texas dropout reporting system is reflected in the fact that the U.S. Department of Education and others who report state-level school statistics use their own alternative methods for estimating the Texas dropout rate, due in large measure to concerns with Texas' existing dropout reporting system.

It is critical that the state update and streamline its own dropout reporting process. Whether referred to as leavers or dropouts, far too many Texas students are leaving our schools without earning their high school diplomas. Dr. Robledo Montecel stated, "We can continue to distort these realities by resorting to tricks like cumbersome definitions and unwieldy reporting and counting systems, or we can simplify the process so that it is both understandable and believable" (2000). Our children and our public need and deserve more of both, for we cannot fix what we do not understand, and we cannot act on what we do not believe.

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Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is the director of the IDRA Division of Evaluation Research. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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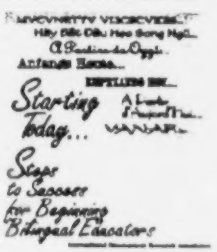

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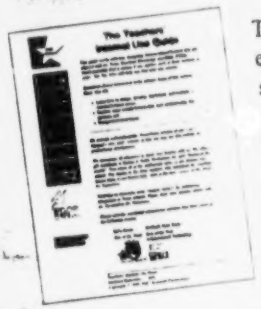

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- ✔ **Web Site Evaluation Guidelines**
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Parents, community liaisons and community resource personnel will come together to focus on parent leadership and outreach. The video conference will be held at participating Texas regional education service centers. Contact Yojani Hernández at IDRA (210/444-1710) for details.

Parent Institute – Thursday, April 26
This one-day event will concentrate on the challenges in early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. Parents and educators will dialogue on ways to focus their leadership to enhance early childhood learning.

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

ISSN 1069-5672 Volume XXVII, No. 10 Nov. - Dec. 2000

Nine Priorities for Public Education Policy Reforms in Texas

María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., and Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

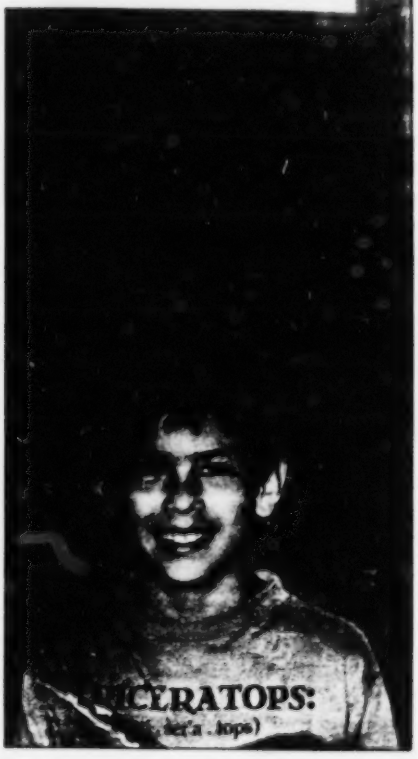
Inside this Issue:

Preparing for the next Texas legislative session

Successful school-community-higher education partnerships

A school district's dual language experience

Upcoming early childhood institute



As the Texas legislature embarks on its next biennial session starting in January of 2001, thoughts once again turn to the issues that will be at the forefront of the public policy debates. Heading up the state's list of topics will be whether to provide state-supported health insurance coverage to teachers and other educators working in Texas public schools. The debates will be extensive as lawmakers argue over the type and extent of coverage, the extent that local school districts will assume a portion of the cost, who among the range of school staff will be covered, and how the programs will be administered.

An array of other topics will be competing for attention from state lawmakers as well. Among them will be a push to increase funding for the state public school instructional facilities funding, an issue that the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) has long advocated and that is now in its infancy in state funding policy.

While the state has finally begun to provide direct assistance to help schools pay for school buildings, the funds appropriated for this program are grossly inadequate. Schools are forced to compete with one another for limited resources. If a general consensus exists among different interests – including large urban and fast-growing suburban districts and rural schools, and low-wealth and moderate-wealth school systems – that more monies are needed for these programs, the legislature likely will feel some pressure to expand state support in this area.

There is a growing concern about the worsening shortage of certified teachers. This will lead to various proposals to expand the teaching pool. A coalition of conservative and moderate lawmakers, the Texas Education Reform Caucus, is hoping to address the teacher shortage by making it easier for individuals with other (non-education) degrees to acquire teaching credentials through the state's alternative certification programs. According to testimony provided by the Texas Board for Educator Certification, upwards of 25 percent of all new teaching staff are products of this alternative certification process.

Some educators however have begun to express concern about the high number of new teachers produced through the alternative certification process and may be expanding efforts to conduct research on the achievement levels of pupils taught by such personnel. Other ideas include providing additional monies to schools to help them operate mentoring and other teacher development programs and providing state-funded performance incentives that recognize and reward successful teachers.

The Texas Education Reform Caucus may advocate changes in other areas, including expanding the existing accountability rating system (with its categories of "acceptable," "recognized" and "exemplary") to include new sub-ratings. In this expanded system, schools would get a "gold" rating for meeting both

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the basic rating criteria and additional criteria that could include the percentage of pupils who achieve a proficiency level score on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS); results on norm referenced national tests; numbers of students taking advanced placement classes and their scores on those exams; and other criteria deemed appropriate.

These are important issues. IDRA has chosen to direct its policy reform efforts on a set of nine issues that are focused on students and that on a day-to-day and year-to-year basis impact the short-term and long-term prospects for success. These nine priority areas include:

- School dropouts
- Open enrollment charter schools
- Disciplinary alternative education programs
- In-grade retention
- High stakes testing and accountability
- School facilities funding
- Access to higher education
- Access to comprehensible instruction for students learning English
- Use of public money for private schooling.

A discussion of these issues and IDRA's perspectives on policy considerations in each of these areas are outlined below.

School Dropouts

IDRA has conducted an annual attrition study since 1986 to track the number and percent of students in Texas who are lost from public school enrollment prior to graduation. According to our latest findings, the statewide attrition rate totaled 40 percent in 1999-00. Four of 10 students who were enrolled in the ninth grade in the 1996-97 school year were not enrolled in the 12th grade four years later.

The state definition of a "dropout" must be revised so that *all* students are counted.

In contrast, the state education agency reported a dropout rate of only 1.6 percent. Due to its methods of counting students for dropout calculation purposes, the state of Texas severely undercounts the number of student dropouts, thus masking the severity of the problem. The state dropout definition excludes students who received a General Education Development (GED); students who passed their high school course requirements but were denied a diploma due to failing a portion of the TAAS; students who were thought to have transferred to another school inside or outside of the state; and students believed to have returned to their home countries. The state definition of a "dropout" must be revised so that *all* students are counted.

In order for the state dropout estimates to be credible, a number of reforms need to be considered, specifically:

- Change the definition of who is considered a school dropout to exclude GED, non-verified transfers and other non-verified leavers from high school graduation counts.
- Require reporting of numbers of students graduating with a high school diploma to help verify reported dropout counts.
- Include longitudinal dropout rates in the state accountability rating systems.

For more information on IDRA's research and recommendations regarding student dropouts, see the October 2000 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter* and the policy brief, *Missing: Texas Youth - Dropout and Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools*. Both are available at IDRA's web site: **http://www.idra.org/Newsltr/2000/Oct/Roy.htm** and **http://www.idra.org/Research/dropout.htm**, respectively.

Schools need to be held accountable based on the number of students they are graduating. *All* students must be valued and accounted for.

Open Enrollment Charter Schools

In 1995, the Texas Legislature authorized the creation of 20 charter schools to allow for innovation and community control in a small number of settings with a minimum of state control. Despite the lack of substantive information on the effectiveness of these 20 schools, Texas lawmakers authorized the creation of 100 additional charter schools in 1997 for non at-risk students and an unlimited number of charter schools that primarily proposed to serve at-risk students. Charter

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14 **Internet Web Sites on Education Policy**

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, © 2000) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

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Partnerships Facilitate Educational Access and Opportunity for Latino Youth

Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D., Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., and Ricardo R. Rodríguez

The education of Latino youth is a social justice issue and a national economic imperative. The Latino population is growing dramatically. One out of every four students in a central city public school was Hispanic in 1996 (NCES, 1999). That is an increase from 1972 when only one out of every 10 students was Hispanic. This is a great opportunity for communities and educational institutions to capitalize on the untapped potential of various minority and ethnic groups.

Hispanic students in secondary education represent 13 percent of the current school population in grades nine through 12. By the year 2030, they will represent 23 percent (White House Initiative, January 2000).

Hispanic students currently represent 14.5 percent (3.6 million) of the total college-age population of 18 through 24 years (White House Initiative, January 2000). By the year 2025, they will comprise 22 percent. Educational institutions are under enormous pressure to create powerful learning environments for this growing population.

During the past year, 18 collaboratives among kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) schools, colleges and universities, and communities have engaged in a remarkable endeavor. The ENLACE initiative promises to change the way educational institutions have traditionally addressed the education of Latino youth. The initiative is supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Intercultural Development Research Association is the managing partner.

The collaboratives have begun to systematically create new and innovative opportunities to engage Latino youth. Together, they are creating a critical and vibrant force with a potential to influence public policy and make fundamental institutional changes that will lead to increased access, success and completion for Latino students at all educational levels.

The collaboratives represent a critical mass of people committed to public and institutional change on behalf of students. Institutions of higher education, as lead partners with K-12 schools and communities, have embarked upon a momentous journey at strategic locations in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New York and Texas. These states reflect the diversity of this country's increasingly growing Latino population.

The ENLACE initiative's focus is to create an active partnership among the major stakeholders in the educational pipeline. The key responsibilities of the collaboratives are to create, implement and evaluate fundamental institutional and policy changes that result in powerful learning environments for Latino youth.

The time is right for the kind of courageous commitment these partners are making. The stakes could not be higher for Latino youth, indeed all youth, to reach

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Did You Know?

In 1998, 82.8 percent of adults age 25 and older had completed high school or more, and 24.4 percent had obtained a bachelor's degree.
– U.S. Census Bureau, September 2000

During the past two decades, the proportion of the young adult population with a bachelor's degree changed only modestly, reaching 28 percent in 1999.
– U.S. Census Bureau, September 2000

Adults age 18 and over with a bachelor's degree earned an average of $43,782, while those with only a high school diploma earned $23,594 in 1999.
– U.S. Census Bureau, September 2000

More than one-fourth of the U.S. population, 72.1 million people, were enrolled in school (nursery school through college) in 1998.
– U.S. Census Bureau, October 1998

About 8.4 million children were enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten, 32.6 million in elementary school, 15.6 million in high school, and 15.5 million in college in 1998.
– U.S. Census Bureau, October 1998

Among people enrolled in school in 1998, 65.1 percent were non-Hispanic White, 15.5 percent were non-Hispanic Black, 4.6 were non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander, and 13.2 percent were Hispanic.
– U.S. Census Bureau, October 1998

Among students enrolled in college in 1998, 70.8 percent were non-Hispanic White, 12.6 percent were non-Hispanic Black, 6.5 were non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander, and 8.8 percent were Hispanic.
– U.S. Census Bureau, October 1998

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

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their fullest potential.

A major evaluation question being addressed by these 18 collaboratives is to see how partnerships can support Latino student success among K-12 schools, higher education and communities. This article highlights some lessons learned from the past year of building partnerships. Some of the partnerships were strong and are becoming stronger, and others have just begun to join forces, emerging during the past 12 months of planning with support through their W.K. Kellogg Foundation planning grants in 2000.

A cohesive and powerful movement is emerging. Also, a new way of co-creating a better educational reality for young people is forming based on the principles of engagement, access and opportunity.

Building Meaningful Relationships

Successful partnerships share a purpose, a vision and a commitment to influence institutional and public policy changes that will result in increased Latino enrollment and graduation rates from our high schools and higher education institutions. Successful partnerships are characterized by relationships that are based on mutual respect, trust, openness, commitment and passion for educational equity and excellence for all youth. It is the formation, and nurturing of strong consistent relationships built on respect and trust and focused on the well-being of youth that makes the difference.

Some essential elements of successful partnerships are a delineation, a definition and a mutual understanding of the relationships that provide the glue for the stakeholders to act cohesively in a transformational effort to address the education of Latino youth comprehensively. Without this cohesiveness, we would have a kaleidoscope of unrelated efforts with limited success and impact.

In ENLACE, these relationships are bound by a definition of each partner's role in contributing to and ensuring the success of Latino youth. The figure in the box depicts the issues and roles that are addressed in the relationships among the stakeholders represented in collaborators' evaluation reports.

In the meantime, key learnings to date are germinating from these successful partnerships. The following are eight lessons that have emerged during this past ENLACE planning year.

Recognizing the Strength of Communities and Families

Inclusive partnerships recognize that our strength lies in our communities and families. The ENLACE partners pro-actively have included, valued and integrated the assets brought forth by parents and communities during the planning phase. They see the importance of linking life-long learning to the language and culture of the families in the community. Successful ENLACE collaborations recognize and value traditional as well as nontraditional learning. They seek out and engage parents, community-based organizations, businesses and community members in the decision-making process across sectors.

In the ENLACE initiative, the community is valued as a cornerstone of learning, an indispensable partner that supports students' right to know and values their unique diversity and that honors and strengthens culture, language and values.

It has been said, "A people without knowledge of their language and culture is like a tree without roots." In this new paradigm, language and culture are not viewed as problems to be solved, but as blessings and strengths to our entire society and as integral parts of the learning process.

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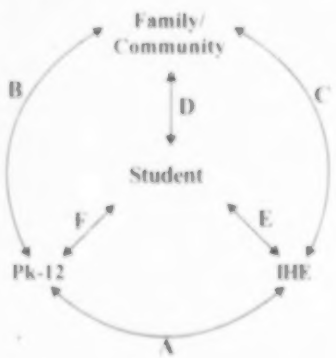
ENLACE Initiative Stakeholder Relationships Key Issues and Roles



Relationship A (IHE: K-12) addresses issues of: curriculum alignment, teacher preparation, purpose and role clarification, content articulation, and cultural relevance in curriculum.

Relationship B (K-12: Community) addresses issues of: policies and practices, community support, workforce opportunities, parental school involvement, and valuing language and culture.

Relationship C (IHE: Community) addresses issues of: educational commitment, valuing non-traditional learning, language and cultural relevance, and parental involvement in educational decision-making.

Relationship D (Students: Community) addresses issues of: student persistence, literacy, community service, community support, social services, and strengthening civic engagement.

Relationship E (IHE: Students) addresses issues of: student academic and financial support, valuing diversity, curriculum access, leadership opportunities, outreach and retention, standards and assessment, and community and familial support.

Relationship F (K-12: Students) addresses issues of: academic quality, safety, student academic support, promotion and retention, and pre-collegiate preparation.

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Developing Trust

Strategic partnerships invest time and resources to develop trust and grow stronger. The ENLACE collaborations are demonstrating the importance of getting commitment and support from the top decision and policy-makers of the institutions involved.

Sustainable partnerships also require technical assistance and support in order to develop the trust that is necessary for true accountability to one another. Forced marriages usually do not work. Therefore, the elements of time and support to strengthen a partnership are very important. Time is needed in order to develop a common goal that can be articulated by all partners, one that is understood by each member and is always squarely focused on student success. These partnerships emerge with a solid and unified commitment not only for high academic expectations, but also for support and student success.

Sharing Leadership

Pro-active partnerships have a commitment to shared leadership through engagement and accountability. This leadership requires imaginative, spirited and determined commitment. The leadership teams of these collaborations include individuals from diverse backgrounds, disciplines and sectors. Resources are allocated to strengthen existing as well as emerging leadership by incorporating student voices into key decision-making roles.

The key question is: Leadership for what? The answer for ENLACE partners is: leadership for engagement and student success. Because of this, support for student leadership development is at the core of successful ENLACE partnerships. The incorporation of student voices in the planning and decision-making processes is the key to long-term sustainability.

Articulating a Shared Vision

Engaged partnerships have a clearly articulated and strongly shared vision that is inclusive of the role and importance each partner will play. This vision is broader than the individual agendas of each partner or institution. The word "ENLACE" is derived from the Spanish word *enlazar*, which means to weave or work together in such a way that the whole is stronger than the parts. It is this inter-connected vision of student success through engagement that moves the partnerships forward strategically.

Each partner comes to the collaboration with a unique role and is valued for the strength it brings to the shared vision. Furthermore, each partner brings a valued and respected skill and perspective that will help in creating an effective strategy and plan for student success. Diversity is valued in these collaborations as essential for the creation of a shared vision and a successful partnership.

Planning Together

Visionary partnerships develop a viable plan, a blueprint for educational change. This plan is created by all of the members of the collaborations. The process begins by taking the time to carefully analyze and understand the students within the local context of their respective sites. These partnerships begin by identifying key data, setting goals that are clear and holding themselves accountable for achieving these goals.

Successful partnerships establish baseline data as a point of reference from which to proceed. They review relevant national data and best practice models as they develop strategies that are tailor-made to their students in the local environment. They create a viable plan, which becomes their map for engagement with one another. Each member of the successful collaborations can articulate the vision and the goals for their blueprint and understands the unique part they play in supporting student access and academic success. This unified vision, combined with a viable plan, has great promise for yielding several models for best practice within diverse community contexts.

Creating Principles of Engagement

Interactive partnerships develop and adhere to principles of engagement. Some of the strongest partnerships have taken the time to identify the ways in which they plan to interact with one another, including how they intend to resolve any differences that might occur. These partnerships are resilient and have promise of long-lasting success because they recognize that diversity is their strength and that, through their diverse opinions and perspectives, they agree to disagree respectfully without losing their balance or central focus. Again, they keep their "eyes on the prize" of student success and the overall goal of increased access, retention and graduation.

These partnerships agree on how resources will be shared and how decisions will be made. These agreements are an asset-based approach (i.e., a focus on valuing the assets of each partner) vs. a deficit or blaming approach or perspective. Within these terms of engagement are explicit values and principles that are shared by all the members and reflect the heart of the work, ultimately the goal of student success.

Successful partnerships share a purpose, a vision and a commitment to influence institutional and public policy changes that will result in increased Latino enrollment and graduation rates from our high schools and higher education institutions.

Planning for Impact

Strategic partnerships are resilient because they plan for impact and sustainability from the beginning. In order to do this, collaborators develop a network of key stakeholders, both internal and external. Their impact strategies are comprehensive and include a communications and dissemination strategy from the beginning to assess progress made, make mid-course adjustments and inform key stakeholders about their projects on an ongoing basis. They identify stories that capture the real-life people behind the numbers. This helps to get the word out about best practices to potential funders and policy-makers with whom they regularly communicate.

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They also identify specific practice and policy targets for change within the system or institutions involved and find ways to link ENLACE efforts to other key programs in order to leverage resources.

This type of comprehensive planning also calls for a comprehensive evaluation plan that is identified and implemented from the very beginning of the project. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation emphasizes the importance of evaluation that "seeks to improve rather than to prove." Therefore successful partnerships consider evaluation as a capacity-building strategy, another tool in the overall management of their projects. They are deliberate in sharing evaluation information with other members of their collaborations on a regular basis.

Learning from Each Other

In cohesive partnerships, each choice made by the partners creates a future. Each person influences and is influenced by the other partners. These partnerships help all of us to learn new ways of understanding and relating to one another, valuing the uniqueness of each partner in supporting student success. Successful partnerships recognize and capitalize on the value of external support for consultation and information. This external support can come in the form of technical assistance in project planning and development, program education, communication and dissemination, planning for sustainability, and proposal development.

Summary

These types of partnerships are forging ahead for a new way of educational planning, a new way of relating to diverse partners who together make responsible choices on behalf of youth. They are discovering higher forms of creating solutions that can support student success. Their trust keeps them together. Their vision and talent will guide them. They are exercising authentic power within their institutions and communities to create educational reform.

These partnerships are crucial because no one sector or institution can succeed in this effort alone. We wish them much success in this important endeavor and look with anticipation to the models they are creating, for a better future on behalf of all children and youth.

All of the collaborations enthusiastically are seeking additional funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and other funders to continue the important work they have begun. In early January, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation will announce its next phase of support for the four-year ENLACE initiative's implementation. While it cannot support all the partnerships involved, the foundation hopes other businesses, foundations and local supporters will come forward to become learning partners with these 18 collaborations.

Let us aggressively support their efforts, not only for the valuable lessons and models emerging from these collaborations focused on Latino student success, but also for the light of wisdom that these diverse partners can shed on our collective efforts for all youth. We wish each of the partners much success as they continue their bold experiments in creating the public and institutional will for positive educational change.

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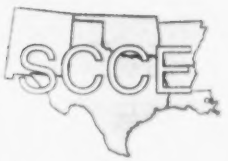

Do We Lose Ourselves When We Lose Our Language? Why Care About Language Recapture

Hilaria Bauer, M.A.

Last year I found myself driving to yet another new town. The place I was looking for was Mora, New Mexico. As I drove from Santa Fe to Las Vegas – where I had detoured on my search for Mora – I kept thinking, "How in the world do I get myself into these assignments?" I was about to find out.

After driving for the longest 40 minutes in history, I arrived in Mora. There I would talk about Project FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal), one of IDRA's very effective staff development programs. I was greeted by the assistant superintendent of Mora Public Schools. He wanted to tell me about one of his district's main concerns, language recapture.

The idea of recapturing language started with Mora's Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) committee. The EPSS committee was composed of community members, school staff, parents and students. Some of the district's data reflected Mora students doing well on standardized testing but not being able to take Advanced Placement Spanish courses in high school or at the university level.

The committee felt that something was missing when Hispanic students who were able to converse with their families in Spanish were not able to perform well academically in the language. Also, the committee felt that the culture – the way of life as New Mexican-Hispanics – was being lost. They wanted to preserve it in their community as much as possible.

According to an elementary principal who was a member of the EPSS committee, the committee had perceived the need for students to become bilingual and biliterate in order to obtain an edge in the job market and an opportunity for a better way of life. An idea evolved to teach Spanish to primarily English-speaking Hispanic students.

The assistant superintendent wanted to find out if our staff development model would be useful for his teachers as they attempted to introduce and develop academic Spanish to a generation of Mora's students who had grown up hearing some casual Spanish from their *guelitos* and *guelitas* [grandparents]. My response to that was, "*Absolutamente, claro qué sí!* [Absolutely, but of course! Yes!]"

The committee felt that something was missing when Hispanic students who were able to converse with their families in Spanish were not able to perform well academically in the language.

The Intercultural Development Research Association's (IDRA) South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE) is the equity assistance center that serves schools and education agencies in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas in the areas of race, gender and national origin equity. IDRA creates high-powered assistance for local education agencies through one-on-one interaction – such as training in the value of diversity and preventing sexual harassment – and other support assistance – such as training packages, videos and technical assistance modules.

We met with a group of administrators and teachers in order to decide what was needed for this site's intervention. As we brainstormed ideas, we identified three major categories for the development of a dual language program in Mora. This model provides dual language instruction to bilingual and monolingual English speakers.

The three categories being addressed are curriculum development, staff training and identification of appropriate materials. We set priorities and decided to begin with staff training. We have learned that administrators and teachers who have information and decision-making skills are better at designing curriculum and choosing materials.

After designing our plan of action for staff training, we began identifying relevant information for the initiative and effective instructional strategies to match the goal. The elementary school principal and the middle school principal provided the first area of information collection. Both were able to provide the group with support and information about the need for academic language development in Mora, in English and in Spanish.

For a number of years, Mora's staff had been wanting to preserve the area's culture and provide a challenging curriculum to empower students with a healthy sense of who they are and where they come from. In addition, the staff has been determined to equip students to perform well academically in the different subject areas. As a result, teachers began to develop thematic units that were based on a pedagogy of "place."

Place pedagogy guides students to understand their reality first as a means to connect to the broader global community. Without negating the importance of having a sense of responsibility toward the global community, place pedagogy argues that children cannot comprehend, much less feel a commitment toward, issues and problems in distant places until they have a well-grounded knowledge of their own place. The place that one inhabits can teach about the interdependency of social and natural systems (Arenas, 1999).

In the beginning, the units were offered only at the middle school level and were driven by the teachers involved in the initiative. Teachers at the middle school developed units that had a very regional flavor. Some of the topics included a unit on "Remedios" and another on "The Woods of Mora."

As we at IDRA introduced Project FLAIR to the group, a better sense for curriculum development for the whole district began to emerge. Teachers and staff began

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to question how they could help their students become biliterate as they integrate the state's curriculum. They began to answer their own questions as they developed Mora's dual language curriculum.

In Mora, the dual language curriculum incorporates three basic components.

What to teach. Across grade levels, teachers wanted to introduce students to their own town, their culture and their language. As students progress through the different grade levels, they will encounter, during the first nine weeks of school, more in-depth information about Mora. Kindergarten students begin with basic facts about Mora, while middle school students go back in time to encounter Mora's first Spanish arrivals and their interactions with Mora's native populations. The lessons integrate language, authentic literature, music, and social and natural science elements.

How to teach. Dual language instruction by definition requires two languages. Thus, the team had to decide when and how these languages needed to be instructed and used. As the curriculum emerged, decisions about "which language when" were made, and the lessons began to reflect the planning.

The team also identified powerful instructional strategies to assure the content was learned. Cooperative learning and a balanced approach to literacy were selected to deliver instruction. In addition, teachers received staff development in Spanish language arts. Many teachers wanted to polish their own Spanish skills. They wanted to know how to instruct in academic Spanish. The team allowed the regional language to be used, with the addition of the standard version of the language, in order to help students understand some of the literature chosen.

Materials to use. The process of materials selection begins taking place after knowing what things need to be addressed. Teachers and staff have been looking for materials that are relevant to the initiative and, in the process, they have learned to discard unnecessary materials. One of the principals shared with me how this was the first year teachers had to justify their selections according to the curriculum, which helped the school to allocate resources more effectively.

The effort in Mora is still in p. ogress. The team is working on how to finish the curriculum for the whole year. However, last year's test scores in both schools were very promising.

As for me, I must report that my relationship with this project has provided me with tremendous opportunities for professional and personal growth. I am a fervent advocate of bilingual education, and having had the opportunity to work with Mora has allowed me to understand how wide is the spectrum for bilingualism in our country.

* * *

On a more personal note... I would like to say "*Mil Gracias* IDRA!" for the unbelievable opportunity of working with so many fabulous people around the nation and across the waters. I am moving to California with my family. My husband has accepted a pastoral job in San José, and I will be directing some vertical slice programs with East Side Union High School District. *A todos muchisimas gracias y nos vemos en Califas!*

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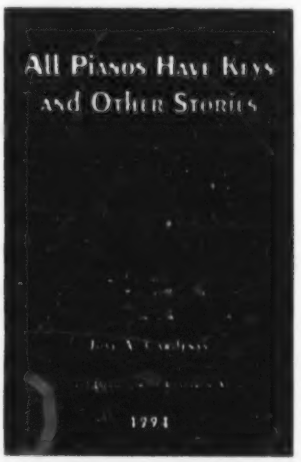
All Pianos Have Keys and Other Stories

by Dr. José A. Cárdenas



In a way, this small, 134-page book complements Dr. José A. Cárdenas' larger *Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy* published by Simon and Schuster. The multicultural education book is an anthology of 92 professional articles resulting from his 45 years as a professional educator. *All Pianos Have Keys* represents the lighter side of these 45 years.

"The seriousness of my professional life has been paralleled by extensive humor in my personal life. I enjoy a funny story and a good joke," writes Cárdenas in the Preface.

The first eight articles deal with the lighter side of his life. They include personal anecdotes from childhood to adulthood. The second section consists of 12 anecdotes where humor and professional seriousness have intersected. The last section consists of nine articles on a variety of professional topics addressed in a lighter context than is possible in professional publications.

All Pianos Have Keys is distributed exclusively by the Intercultural Development Research Association ($12.70). Contact IDRA at 210-444-1710 or 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228. Fax 210-444-1714. Shipping and handling is 10 percent of the total price of the order. Orders must be prepaid. Purchase orders for orders totaling more than $30 are accepted. Overstock returns are not accepted unless by prior written agreement.

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Each issue of the *IDRA Newsletter* concentrates on one particular topic. In 2000, the topics included the following.

Bilingual Education
Volume XXVII, No. 1, January

Excellence Requires Equity
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Accountability
Volume XXVII, No. 3, March

Early Childhood
Volume XXVII, No. 4, April

Equity and Excellence
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Parents and Communities
Volume XXVII, No. 6, June-July

Educational Pipeline
Volume XXVII, No. 7, August

Leadership in Diversity
Volume XXVII, No. 8, September

Dropout Prevention
Volume XXVII, No. 9, October

Education Policy
Volume XXVII, No. 10, November-December

IDRA is a non-profit educational, research and development organization dedicated to the improvement of education opportunities of all children. Through research, materials development, training, technical assistance, evaluation, and information dissemination, we're helping to create schools that work for all children.

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schools in Texas operate under a much less stringent oversight than do other public schools.

IDRA refrained from making assessments of charter schools pending the availability of data on their performance. But recently, a consortium of Texas universities completed the third of a series of annual evaluations, *Texas Open-Enrollment Charter Schools: Third Year Evaluation* (July 2000). Based on three years of evaluation data, the great majority of open enrollment charter schools, despite many promises, have fallen far short of expectations, and significant state-level reforms are required.

According to the state's own evaluation, compared to public schools, charter schools have a higher student turnover rate (55 percent compared to 23 percent in public schools); perform lower in the core subjects of reading, math and writing; on average, employ less experienced staff; and have a teacher turnover rate (55 percent) three times above the state average (15.4 percent).

Despite data showing mainly poor results, many policy-makers support increasing the number of charter schools and state funding for them. Based on the evaluation findings, IDRA believes that the state of Texas should:

- Initiate a moratorium on approvals for new open enrollment charter schools.
- Increase its oversight of all charter school operations.
- Create mechanisms for accelerated action in those charter schools found to be under-performing.

A copy of IDRA's testimony regarding open enrollment charter schools is available online at: **http://www.idra.org/Media/charter.htm**.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs

Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) were created in 1995 as part of the Texas Safe Schools Programs. The primary intention was to create a way for teachers temporarily to remove violent and seriously disruptive pupils from classrooms. Unfortunately, there are large numbers of students who are sent to DAEPs for less serious offenses.

There are emerging concerns regarding the inequitable placements and the poor quality of these programs, yet there is little comprehensive data that is available regarding the effectiveness of DAEPs. According to IDRA's research, a disproportionate number of students sent to DAEPs are minority (66 percent) and are considered at risk of dropping out (60 percent). Bowing to school district complaints, the state has allowed these programs to be staffed by less qualified teachers, and it has no requirements that the educational programs be comparable to those offered to students in the regular school setting.

Testimony presented at public hearings has depicted some DAEPs as being warehouses for students who have been written off by school systems, the last stop for too many pupils on their way to dropping out. IDRA recommends that the state:

- Require that DAEPs collect and report more student and program data, including student performance on TAAS and other measures and discipline and academic achievement after students return to the regular school program.
- Require greater communication and coordination between DAEPs and regular school programs.
- Limit DAEP referrals to the most serious offenders (as originally intended).
- Require greater comparability in program and staff credentials between DAEPs and regular schools.

A copy of IDRA's policy brief, *Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in Texas – What is Known; What is Needed*, is available on IDRA's web site: **http://www.idra.org/Research/alted.htm**.

When they were first created, DAEPs were touted as special environments that would allow schools to focus on smaller groups of students with special counseling and academic needs. DAEPs have not lived up to the promises made when they were created. It is time for major changes to these programs.

In-grade Retention

Many people mistakenly believe that students who did not master material from the previous year should be retained in grade. This is based on the unsupported assumption that simply repeating the previous year's material will lead to improved learning. In-grade retention is also touted as an alternative to "social promotion," the practice of passing a

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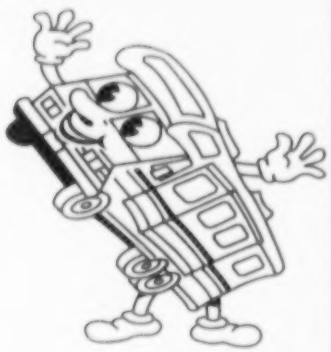

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- ✧ Internet resources
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How do you know you've made a difference in a child's life?

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student to the next grade despite performance in order for that student to move along the grades with his or her peer group. Some consider in-grade retention an appropriate punishment for students who are believed to have purposefully not learned what was required during the school year. Too often, policy-makers and the general public have not given consideration to the research on retention.

Studies repeatedly have shown that in-grade retention simply does not work. The research indicates that over half of retained students actually do worse the year after they are retained, one-fourth do no better, and only one-tenth actually improve. More importantly, in-grade retention has been linked to dropping out. One retention increases the probability of dropping out by 50 percent, and two retentions almost guarantees it.

In-grade retention places almost all burden of accountability on students and little on schools. Most cases of in-grade retention in Texas involve minority and economically-disadvantaged students and male students. A disproportionate number of retentions in Texas occur in the ninth grade. This issue is increasingly significant due to the passage of Senate Bill 103 in 1999. Beginning in school year 2002-03, the Texas State Board of Education will phase-in new standards that will result in children grades three through 12 being retained in grade if they fail the TAAS.

Given what is known about the impact of retention on future student success, IDRA recommends that Texas:

- Modify the state student retention policy so that in-grade retention becomes the *last option* considered.
- Eliminate the use of the TAAS as the single criteria for determining grade placement.
- Modify grade placement committee procedures to require not a unanimous vote but a majority vote to promote students.

IDRA's policy brief, *Failing Our Children – Finding Alternatives to In-Grade Retention*, summarizes the issue of in-grade retention and related research. It is available online at: **http://www.idra.org/Research/ingrade.htm.**

High Stakes Testing and Accountability

Testing is important because it enables the education system to be held accountable. Testing is designed to show that all students, including those who are minority or from low-income households, are getting the same benefits from education as are higher socio-economic status White children. Test data is important to help inform school decisions regarding students.

While we should recognize what has been achieved, we must also acknowledge that we still have far to go before it can be said that, in Texas, all children are truly valued – and that all are successful.

All that said, emerging data is suggesting that Texas is placing disproportionate emphasis on the results of the TAAS. Tests and other assessment tools are not always used appropriately. Though originally conceived as a means of informing instruction, the use of the TAAS was quickly expanded to include its use as the primary criterion to determine whether a student will be granted a diploma. More recently, the TAAS has become the primary criterion for determining whether a student is promoted to the next grade. Thus, it has become a "high-stakes" test.

Unfortunately, use of high stakes assessment for graduation or grade-level promotion does not consider factors such as the quality of instruction that is provided to pupils or whether schools have access to all the resources needed to prepare students to be successful on this measure. As more and more students master the TAAS, there is an emerging discussion about raising state testing standards, suggesting that the mere creation of the state test, by itself, will produce better academic outcomes.

Most recently, studies of the state testing program conducted by the Rand Corporation (Grissmer, et al., 2000) and others (Haney, 2000) suggest that Texas' over-reliance on the TAAS has not produced comparable levels of improvement on other nationally normed tests. Haney, in fact, proposes that the state's over-emphasis on the TAAS as a sole criterion for graduation has contributed to the increase in the statewide dropout rate, which was already excessive prior to creation of the TAAS exit-level measure.

Given the well-documented shortcoming of using a single criterion for life-altering decisions involving students, IDRA recommends that state policies be revised so that:

- No single test is used as the single or primary basis for decisions related to students' graduation or grade-level promotion.
- State testing data is used as one indicator but not the single criterion for judging school effectiveness.
- All students are included in state assessment systems, while at the same time ensuring that those instruments are directly linked to what is taught and to the language of instruction.

For more information, see "Why Better Isn't Enough: A Closer Look at TAAS Gains" in the March 2000 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*. It is also available online at: **http://www.idra.org/Newsltr/2000/Mar/Albert.htm**.

School Facilities Funding

All students should have access to high-quality and equitably-funded neighborhood schools, regardless of the wealth of the district they live in. Despite continuing increases in state funding, the gap in spending between rich and poor school districts has continued to grow. Texas' failure to provide adequate state funding for facilities threatens the constitutionality of the existing funding system. While the state has made some progress toward providing funding for school facilities, the current system remains one where not all school districts that need state assistance receive it. In recent months, school districts have appealed to the state to expand schools' limited access to those facilities resources, going so far as pursuing litigation to force the state to provide greater opportunities for some districts to apply for state aid for instructional facilities.

While facilities funding, like all state aid should be based on wealth and degree of need, it should not be limited by a reluctance to allocate the monies needed to support all schools found to be eligible for assistance. Texas facilities funding has suffered from lack of state support and more recently from significant under-funding when examined against the legitimate facilities needs that have been identified. This lack of state support has saddled Texas communities with significant long-term debt and has, in turn, placed excessive tax burdens on local property tax payers. Texas policy-makers should

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continue the reforms initiated in the preceding two sessions and:

- Significantly expand state support for all types of school facilities.
- Make the application process less dependent on limited state support and more dependent on local property tax wealth and degree of need.

Not a single child's education should be dependent on his or her school's ranking for monies available to fund school facilities.

Access to Higher Education

Despite the growing proportion of state enrollments, Latino and other minority and low-income pupils are still vastly under-represented in Texas higher education. Of the limited number who do enroll, many enroll in two-year colleges and never make their way into four-year institutions. While studies on college enrollment cite the importance of students' awareness of course requirements and financial aid opportunities, too many students are still not provided critical information.

According to research conducted by Steve H. Murdock, a demographer with Texas A&M University, if minority enrollment is not increased significantly in the next decade, states in general, and Texas in particular, will not be able to meet the job skill needs of the future economy.

Simply increasing the number of minority and low-income pupils who are admitted into college however will not suffice. Even when minority pupils are accepted and attend colleges, research on student persistence indicates that less that one-half of those admitted ever get a degree. While Texas has made some progress, IDRA recommends that state leaders:

- Study the impact of recent reforms in higher education, including the "10 Percent Plan," and provide additional state-funded scholarships for low-wealth pupils.
- Explore the creation of new initiatives that will strengthen coordination and alignment between K-12 grade education and higher education.
- Create processes to more effectively link data collected at the K-12 and higher education levels to facilitate student tracking and information exchange.
- Accelerate the creation of a system of higher education accountability that gives significant weight to undergraduate and graduate student recruitment, persistence and graduation.

We must ensure that *all* students have access to enter and complete college.

Access to Comprehensive Instruction for Students Learning English

Research has shown that students learn better when taught in a language that they understand best. Research also suggests that effective implementation of bilingual education and English as a second language (ESL) programs is hampered by the lack of adequately prepared teachers and is compounded by inadequate funding. Despite limitations, students in bilingual programs outperform students served in all-English classes. In contrast to other shortsighted states, Texas citizens have historically supported providing comprehensible instruction to students while at the same time developing their English language skills.

More recently, a growing number of Texans have expressed support for state-funded programs that provide all young students the opportunity to master more than one language. While providing enrichment programs through dual language instruction is a worthy goal, policy-makers should consider that creation of these new programs has implications for new and existing programs. Given this observation, IDRA recommends that state policy-makers:

- Assess the implications of providing opportunities for expanded access to dual language instruction that would include all interested pupils.
- Support the creation of pilot dual language programs so the state can gauge the level of interest in such programs and the impact of these options on teacher training needs and state funding formulae.
- Make distinctions between required and

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IDRA Policy Briefs Available

The Intercultural Development Research Association has developed a series of policy briefs on four key issues in education. The series was released in the spring of 1999 to inform community and policy decisions during the Texas legislative session. The series and associated data are available online at www.idra.org (free) or by contacting IDRA for copies ($7 each).

For more information, contact the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership, Dr. Albert Cortez, director, at 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350 • San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190 • phone 210-444-1710 • fax 210-444-1714

Titles Include:

- ***Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in Texas – What is Known; What is Needed***
  www.idra.org/Research/alted.htm
- ***Missing: Texas Youth – Dropout and Attrition in Texas Public High Schools***
  www.idra.org/Research/dropout.htm
- ***Failing Our Children – Finding Alternatives to In-grade Retention***
  www.idra.org/Research/ingrade.htm
- ***Students for Sale – The Use of Public Money for Private Schooling***
  www.idra.org/Research/voucher.htm

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optional programs and ensure state compliance with existing state bilingual and ESL statutes.

For more information on dual language programs, see "Two-way Bilingual Programs: The Demand for a Multilingual Workforce" in the *IDRA Newsletter*. It is available online at: **http://www.idra.org/Newsltr/1999/May/Anna.htm#Art2**. See also the article in this issue on Page 7.

Use of Public Money for Private Schooling

In recent years, a handful of special interest groups have tried to shift the country away from the promise of public schooling available to all children, regardless of income or life circumstance. These groups present various compelling – sometimes contradictory – rationales, but their bottom-line goal is the same: to take public money from public schools and divert it to private schools.

With high-profile personalities and deep pockets, these groups have managed to lead some state policy-makers and concerned individuals to believe there is strong public support for such a radical change. They are mistaken. Voters have repeatedly opposed proposals to support private and religious schools with tax money. Most recently, voters rejected voucher proposals in California and Michigan.

Yet in 1999, Texas legislators considered such proposals, mostly in the form of vouchers that would be given to families to supplement the tuition of a private school for their children. Due to strong vocal opposition from Texas communities, the proposals were not successful. But proponents are likely to try again.

Public schools are institutions that are accountable to the public and to communities. Texas is among a growing number of states that already provide education alternatives in the form of specialty schools, charter schools and public school transfer programs. We must continue to use public money for public schooling, and public schooling must be reformed so that it works for all students. The answer is not to put public money into private schools where it will go to children who already have more options and leave minority and low-income pupils in public schools worse off than they are today. Vouchers would jeopardize equity for all children in public schools by diverting funds to private institutions. Vouchers take money away from neighborhood public schools and the community. Neighborhood public schools would be left only with those students who were not accepted to private schools, becoming places where the forgotten children remain behind with diminished resources and diminished public support. Furthermore, local taxes would be increased to make up for lost tax dollars to schools.

Emerging research clearly indicates that public schools are not improved by diverting public tax money to finance private schooling. IDRA recommends:

- Public tax money should be limited to use for public schools.

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Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In September, IDRA worked with **13,728** teachers, administrators, parents and higher education personnel through **86** training and technical assistance activities and **276** program sites in **12** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

- Preventing Racial Harassment
- Keeping Communication Lines Open Between the School and the Home
- How School Boards Can Deal with Equity Issues in the Districts
- Parent Leadership Development
- Strategies for Beginning Bilingual Education Teachers

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- Las Cruces Public Schools, New Mexico
- Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- Chicago Public Schools, Illinois
- Piñon Unified School District #4, Nevada
- Corpus Christi ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

With help from the IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (SCCE), a New Mexico school district has implemented the second phase of a plan to restructure classroom processes to ensure greater access to learning opportunities for students. After an Office for Civil Rights investigation generated by a compliant under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the school district sought technical assistance in implementing a correction plan to protect the civil rights of language-minority students. The SCCE is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The center provided training of trainer sessions on how to embrace students' culture in the classroom, how to conduct appropriate assessment of language-minority students, and how to develop appropriate teaching styles and classroom practices that value the second language learning characteristics of students. The strategies helped teachers to provide equal access to learning opportunities for all children.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- public school teachers
- parents
- administrators
- other decision makers in public education
- higher education personnel

Services include:

- training and technical assistance
- evaluation
- serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

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- Public schools should continue to be held to high standards and made accountable for student outcomes, including not only achievement, but also high school graduation.

A copy of IDRA's policy brief, *Students for Sale – The Use of Public Money for Private Schooling*, is available online at: **http://www.idra.org/Research/voucher.htm**. IDRA, educators and community organizations understand clearly that the best way to strengthen public schools is to *strengthen* public schools.

Summary

In recent months, Texas has been cited as a place where much reform has taken place and where education miracles have occurred. While this state has undertaken some major reforms over the last two decades, it is wise to remember that in many cases the reforms were forced upon the state – including providing comprehensible instruction to children in the early stages of learning the English language, providing access to public education for recent immigrant pupils, and, more recently, creating a more equitable system of school funding. Other reforms have been adopted reluctantly, in part due to their cost, such as reducing class sizes. Other reforms have been adopted after long and bitter battles, including the creation of the state accountability system. Many of these reforms have helped to improve the quality of Texas public education.

Despite improvements, the "lame still do not indeed walk, nor do the blind yet see," for Texas' education improvements are not so miraculous that we can declare that the system has been cured of all its ills. Today in Texas, many students are still failed by our school systems; too many students continue to drop out prior to graduation; and the gap in achievements between rich and poor and between White and minority pupils still exists. Today in Texas, many teachers are ill-prepared to teach their pupils, and too many communities are burdened with schools that can do well for some but not all of their students. While we should recognize what has been achieved, we must also acknowledge that we still have far to go before it can be said that, in Texas, all children are truly valued – and that all are successful.

Resources

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Upcoming Events

American Association of School Administrators
National Conference on Education

February 16 to 18, 2001
Orlando, Florida

For information contact AASA at 703-875-0748 or www.aasa.org/nce

Giving Children the World...
National Association for Bilingual Education
30th Anniversary Annual Conference

February 20 to 24, 2001
Phoenix, Arizona

For information contact NABE at 888-414-2322 or www.nabe.org/newindex.html

TESOL 2001: Gateway to the Future
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
35th Annual Convention and Exposition

February 27 to March 3, 2001
St. Louis, Missouri

For information contact TESOL at 703-836-0774 or www.tesol.org/conv/index.html

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Garcia J. and L.C. Green. "Conversational Insights: On Combining Literature, the Arts and Technology for Language and Literacy Development." *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, August 1995).

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Internet Web Sites on Education Policy

American Association of University Women http://www.aauw.org
Annie E. Casey Foundation http://www.aecf.org
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) http://www.ascd.org
Center for Public Policy Priorities http://www.cpp.org
Children's Defense Fund http://www.childrensdefense.org
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute http://www.chci.org
Education Commission of the States http://www.ecs.org
Education Week on the Web http://www.edweek.org
Fedworld http://www.fedworld.gov
Gallery Watch http://www.gallerywatch.com
Intercultural Development Research Association http://www.idra.org
James Crawford's Language Policy Web Site and Emporium http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jwcrawford
Kids Count Data http://www.aecf.org/kidscount
National Association for Bilingual Education http://www.nabe.org
National Association for the Education of Young Children http://www.naeyc.org
National Association of State Boards of Education http://www.nasbe.org
National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu
National Coalition of Advocates for Students http://www.ncas1.org
National Council of La Raza http://www.nclr.org
National School Boards Association http://www.nsba.org
Office of Bilingual and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education http://www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA
People for the American Way http://www.pfaw.org
Policy.com http://www.policy.com
Public Education Network http://www.publiceducation.org
Rethinking Schools http://www.rethinkingschools.org
Secretary of Education's Initiatives http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EDInitiatives/
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) U.S. Advocacy http://www.tesol.edu/advocacy/index.htm
Texas Association of School Boards http://www.tasb.org
Texas Education Agency http://www.tea.state.tx.us
Texas Freedom Network http://www.tfn.org
Texas Legislature Online http://www.capitol.state.tx.us
Thomas, Library of Congress http://thomas.loc.gov
U.S. Census Bureau http://www.census.gov
U.S. Department of Education http://www.ed.gov

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

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Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and Maria Aurora Yanez, M.A.

A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

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(**Teacher's Guide** ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

Developed and distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714; e-mail: contact@idra.org. Shipping and handling is 10 percent of the total price of the order. Orders must be prepaid. Purchase orders for orders totaling more than $30 are accepted.

"Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

Eighth Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute™

"Valuing and Capitalizing on the Linguistic and Cultural Assets of a Diverse Student Population"

April 24-26, 2001

Tuesday
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

Wednesday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.*

** luncheon sessions included*

To register now, contact Carol Chávez at IDRA (210-444-1710) for a registration form. Or visit www.idra.org. Early (before March 1) registration fees are:

$175	**Institute registration, April 24-26, 2001***
$75	**Pre-institute registration, April 23, 2001****
$225	**Discounted institute and pre-institute registration**
$15	**Parent institute registration, April 26, 2001**

** Includes institute sessions, Tuesday and Thursday luncheons, two school visits [for first paid registrants], and materials.*
*** Includes pre-institute sessions, luncheon and materials.*

This institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development sessions that are customized to value and capitalize on the linguistic and cultural assets brought forth by a diverse student population. This year's event will focus on building reading concepts and skills of young learners. Topics include: literacy, technology, social development, curriculum, and dual language. You can also take this opportunity to visit model early childhood centers.

Pre-Institute on Reading and Dual Language Programs – Monday, April 23
IDRA will convene a panel of reading experts to provide teaching and classroom management ideas designed to strengthen your approach to developing emergent literacy in more than one language.

Video Conference on Family Issues – Wednesday, April 25
Parents, community liaisons and community resource personnel will come together to focus on parent leadership and outreach. The video conference will be held at participating Texas regional education service centers. Contact Yojani Hernández at IDRA (210-444-1710) for details.

Parent Institute – Thursday, April 26
This one-day event will concentrate on the challenges in early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. Parents and educators will dialogue on ways to focus their leadership to enhance early childhood learning.

All events except the video conference will take place at the San Antonio Airport Hilton. Call 1-877-377-7227 to make reservations. Be sure to reference the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute in order to qualify for the special rate.

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